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THE

# WORKS

OF

# MR. ARCHIBALD M'LEAN,

LATE

PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH,

**EDINBURGH.**

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE, MINISTRY, AND WRITINGS,

BY WILLIAM JONES.

**IN SIX VOLUMES.**

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# WORKS

OF

# ARCHIBALD M'LEAN.

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## VOL. I.

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CHRIST'S COMMISSION ILLUSTRATED.
ESSAY ON THE CALLS AND INVITATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.
ESSAY ON THE DIVINITY AND SONSHIP OF CHRIST.
ESSAY ON THE IMPORT AND EVIDENCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

THE

# COMMISSION

GIVEN BY

JESUS CHRIST TO HIS APOSTLES,

ILLUSTRATED.

REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL

# PREFACE.

THE design of this publication is to draw the Reader's attention to that kind of Christianity which was instituted by Christ himself, and propagated by his inspired apostles according to the commission which he gave them, and which is to be found pure and unadulterated only in the writings of the New Testament.

IT has been the practice of those who have written on primitive Christianity to collect the greater part of their materials from the records of the first three or four centuries, whence they have exhibited a picture of that divine and heavenly religion in many respects very unlike the original.

THE Christian religion began very early to be corrupted. False teachers were propagating their pernicious doctrines even in the days of the apostles. In the age immediately succeeding, its original purity and simplicity were much defaced by a mixture of vain philosophy, error, mysticism and superstition, adopted and propagated by such as were reputed the most pious and orthodox fathers of the church. In the beginning of the fourth century it must have been essentially corrupted, otherwise it could never have been accommodated to the

nations of this evil world, incorporated with the civil constitution, and adopted as the established religion of the Roman empire. This union of church and state paved the way for the kingdom of the clergy, which gradually advanced to the summit of its power and glory in the Romish hierarchy; a kingdom as opposite in all respects to the kingdom of Christ which is not of this world, as the mystery of iniquity is to the mystery of godliness. As therefore we cannot form a proper judgment of pure and genuine Christianity from any records posterior to the apostolic age, much less from the modern forms of it which are at present established among the nations called *Christian*, I have in the following work confined myself entirely to the sacred scriptures, which are the only pure, unerring and unalterable standard of Christian faith and practice.

THE objections of infidels to the truth and excellency of the Christian religion, are many of them founded on the corruptions of it, and the unworthy conduct of many of its professors, with which it has no concern. But if they would not deceive themselves in such an important matter, they ought first to learn from the scriptures what real Christianity is, and then judge of it from its own evidence, pretensions, and merits. If they consult the New Testament, they may easily perceive, that it was never intended as an engine of state, a foundation for priestcraft, or to be subservient in any respect either to the religious pride, or worldly lusts of men: they

may also see, that it was never designed to be a rule for any form of godliness which in the present state of things the nations of this world, as such, may be supposed to assume; and that it is altogether impossible to apply it to such purposes without essentially corrupting it. Its great object is to make known the way of salvation from guilt and misery through a crucified Saviour, and by this means to reconcile men unto God, to separate them from the communion of infidels and ungodly professors, to unite them among themselves in the closest union and most fervent love for the truth's sake, and to direct and influence them in their conformity and obedience to Christ in this world, that they may partake of his glory in the next. In this view the New Testament appears a plain, perfect and consistent rule, but in no other; for its chief design is to promote the interests of that kingdom which is declared to be *not of this world.*

THE evidence of the truth of the Christian religion does not rest solely upon human authority. It claims our belief and regard as a revelation from God, and bears such proofs of its divine origin, as will undoubtedly leave every one who rejects it without excuse. It clearly evinces itself to be the exact and circumstantial fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies; and who but the omniscient God could possibly foresee or reveal before-hand such a wonderful scheme and series of events, so remote, and so different from the ordinary course of things?

who but the almighty Governor of the universe could so over-rule the determinations of free agents, and so order and dispose all things in a subserviency to his purpose, as to ensure and effectuate a circumstantial accomplishment of such predictions?—The miracles which at first attended the publication of the gospel were so many divine attestations of its truth, for none but the Almighty could possibly perform them. They were so mighty, wonderful and numerous, and done so openly in the sight of multitudes, that the most prying and obstinate opposers could not deny them; and though some most absurdly ascribed them to the agency of demons, yet others no less inimical to the cause, were constrained to acknowledge that they were effects of divine power; so that it was reserved for the infidels of latter times to dispute the reality of them.—The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is another demonstrative proof of the truth of his religion. He referred his enemies to this evidence of his divine mission, and the precautions they took to prevent all imposition in this matter, served only to establish more clearly the truth of the fact. He shewed himself alive to his apostles after his passion by many infallible proofs, and was also seen of above five hundred brethren at once, who were appealed to as living witnesses of it many years after. As the chosen witnesses of this important fact had every possible means of satisfying themselves, so they could not be deceived; and they confirmed the truth of their testimony to others by

miracles, and demonstrated the sincerity of their own belief by sealing it with their blood.—Besides these, the internal characters of the Christian religion clearly demonstrate its divine original. It gives such a glorious manifestation of the true God, as infinitely transcends all our best natural conceptions of him. It exhibits such an amazing plan of redemption, so admirably calculated to display the divine character, and so well suited to the perishing condition of guilty mortals, that none but God could either contrive, execute or reveal it. Its doctrines are so sublime and heavenly, its precepts so pure and perfect, its motives so noble and powerful, and the whole of it so worthy of God, so greatly surpassing all that could have entered into the heart of man to conceive, and yet, when revealed so consonant to his enlightened reason and conscience, and so conducive to his best end and interest, that it clearly manifests itself to be from heaven. Such, however, as have no discernment of divine excellence, nor any relish for the things of God, cannot properly perceive this last kind of evidence. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Hence the necessity of divine illumination.

THOSE who profess the Christian religion ought to try their faith and practice by the New Testament, which is the infallible rule, and the only standard that

Christ hath authorised and established in his kingdom. So far as their profession does not agree with the word of Christ and his inspired apostles it is undoubtedly false, however sanctioned by universal custom, human systems, or national establishments: "We are of God," says the Apostle, "he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

If we take a view of what currently passes for Christianity in what is called the Christian world, and compare it with the religion contained in the New Testament we shall scarcely be able to trace a resemblance. The greater part think they have a title to be called Christians from their country, birth, or what they call baptism, though they know little more of the religion of Jesus than Mohammedans or Pagans do. Multitudes are zealously attached to the authorised forms of their country, whose faith is founded on human instead of divine authority, and whose fear of God is taught by the precepts of men.

Among those who acknowledge in general that the word of God is the only rule of Christian faith and practice, there are many who, in direct opposition to that principle, claim a liberty to add to, or dispense with that rule, according as the difference of times, established customs, or other circumstances may, in their opinion, require. Many pass high encomiums on primitive Christianity, and profess to

admire the divine purity of its doctrines, and the beautiful simplicity of its institutions, worship, order and dicipline, who yet freely censure every attempt to revive it.* It is impossible for candour itself to reconcile this with a due regard for the word of God, unless we can suppose that they look upon that word as calculated only for the first age of Christianity, or as authorising the superstitious institutions of succeeding generations. Those who would be thought liberal in their sentiments despise what they call the little singularities of parties, and they are right so far as these singularities are of human invention. They do not, however, stop here, but treat many things in the New Testament itself as matters of indifference or non-essentials: but whatever may be said of the comparative importance of things, it is essential to the character of a true Christian to consider himself as indispensibly bound to believe and practise all things whatsoever Christ hath revealed or enjoined in his word, so far as he understands it; so that no article of the faith once delivered to the saints, nor any one of the least of Christ's commandments, however singular and unfashionable they may be, can, in the fear of God, be treated as the trivial nostrums of a party. True Christianity is the most benevolent and generous religion that ever appeared on the earth; but at the

* Take for an instance of this, the censure which Dr. Mosheim and his translator pass upon Ærius for condemning the superstition of his time, and attempting to reduce Christianity to its primitive simplicity, though they allow that the design, considered in itself, was noble and laudable. *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. I. p. 314, 315. *2nd Edition.*

same time it is a very singular institution; it is not of this world, but quite opposite to the spirit and course of it: therefore such as unreservedly follow Christ, and conscientiously observe his sayings, must necessarily be distinguished from the world, and looked upon as a party.

Several additions have been made to this new edition. At the end I have given a sketch of the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse, with the corresponding prophecies in the Old Testament, and marked the distinguished events in which many of these predictions seem to have been already accomplished. I have also, taking the prophets for my guide, set forth in several particulars the happiness of the Millennium period, without presuming to fix the times or seasons of future events.

As to the execution of this work, I leave the Reader to judge for himself, and only request that he would not hastily reject any thing advanced till he has first carefully consulted the scripture authorities referred to at the bottom of the pages: and in so far as it tends to promote the glory of God and the cause of pure and undefiled religion, I earnestly pray that it may be attended with the divine blessing.

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THEOLOGICAL

THE

# COMMISSION

GIVEN

# BY JESUS CHRIST

## TO HIS APOSTLES

ILLUSTRATED.

MATT. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

THESE words were spoken by Jesus after he had risen from the dead, convinced his disciples of the truth of his resurrection, and instructed them in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. They contain his last and solemn charge or commission to his apostles respecting the part they were to act in setting up and promoting his king-

dom in the world, now that he was about to leave them, and ascend unto the throne of his glory.

## Christ's Power and Dominion.

This charge he introduceth by asserting his universal power, authority, and dominion: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

All power in *heaven* is given unto him. There his royal seat, the throne of his kingdom, is placed, which he was then going to take possession of. The saints who have died in the faith since the beginning of the world, and who are now in heaven, are all his subjects; for he is Lord both of the dead and living;[a] he reigns before his ancients gloriously, whilst they cast down their crowns before him, and worship the Lamb that was slain.[b] Nay, the highest created beings, angels, authorities and powers, are made subject unto him,[c] and commanded to worship him.[d] They are all servants of the Son of man to fulfil his pleasure, and minister at his command to the heirs of salvation.[e]

All power in *earth* is given unto him. For though his kingdom is not of this world, nor promoted and supported like earthly kingdoms; yet the heathen is given him for an inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession,[f] that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him:[g] for he is the governor among the nations,[h] and takes out of

a Rom. xiv. 9. b Rev. iv. 10, 11. and v. 9. c 1 Pet. iii. 22.
d Psal. xcvii. 7. Heb. i. 6. e Heb. i. 14. f Psal. 2. 8.
g Dan. vii. 14. h Psal. xxii. 28.

them a people for his name;[i] having power given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him.[k] His power also extends over all the adversaries of his kingdom in the world, whether men or devils. He rules in the midst of his enemies;[l] and makes all their determinations and measures, however wickedly intended, subservient to his own glory and the real good of his subjects; and all who will not have him to reign over them, he shall break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.[m] And though we see not yet all things *actually* reduced under him, according to the full extent of the Father's promise; yet being crowned with glory and honour at the right hand of God, and vested with all power and effective might to subdue all things unto himself, he is from henceforth *expecting* till his enemies be made his footstool, and must reign till that be fully accomplished.[n]

This includes a power to judge the world. Accordingly, he is ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead;[o] he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.[p] On the appointed day,[q] therefore, he will summons before his awful and equitable tribunal the living and the dead of all nations, judge them according to their works,[r] and pronounce upon them the irrevocable sentence of everlasting happiness or misery.[s]

i Acts xv. 14. k John xvii. 2. l Psal. cx. 2. m Psal. ii. 9. n Heb. ii. 8, 9. Phil. iii. 21. Heb. x. 12, 13. 1 Cor xv. 25. o Acts x. 42. p John v. 27 q Acts xvii. 31. r Matt. xxv. 31, 32. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12, 13. s Matt. xxv. 34. 41.

What an amazing power is this? He terms it *all* power. It is immense in its degree, and unlimited in its extent. None are exempted from it but He who put all things under him.[t] It extends over heaven, earth, and hell—angels, men, and devils---the world which now is, and that which is to come. It is various in its manner of exercise, according to its different objects in nature, providence, and grace; but with unity of design, which is to display the Divine perfections in rectifying the disorders introduced by sin amongst the works of God.

This power, he says, was given unto him, viz. by his Father; so he elsewhere declares, "All things are delivered to me of my Father."[u] "The Father" (says John) "loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."[x] It is in the economy of redemption, and as connected with human nature, that God hath constituted him heir of all things.[y] He was fore-ordained to this power and dominion before the foundation of the world; he manifested his title to it, and was animated by the prospect of it in the days of his flesh, when he appeared in the form of a servant;[z] but he did not obtain the full and actual possession and exercise of this power, nor of the glory, honour, and dignity connected with it, till after his death and resurrection from the dead.[a]

t 1 Cor. xv. 27. Heb. ii. 8. u Matt. xi. 27. x John iii. 35. y Heb. i. 2. and v. 5, 6. z Matt. xi. 27. Heb. xii. 2. a Philip. ii 8, 9, 10 Luke xxiv. 26. Compare Psal. cxxxii. 11. with Acts ii. 30, 31. and Psal. cx. 1. with Acts ii. 34---37. and Psal. ii. 7. with Acts xiii. 33

## *Christ's Power and Dominion the* GROUND *and* REASON *of the Commission.*

WHEN Jesus declares his power, and adds, "Go ye therefore," &c. he evidently, by the word (οὖν) *therefore,* refers to his power as the ground or reason of the commission. And an obvious reason it is: For if Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth; if all judgment is committed to him, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father;[b] if every man is accountable to him, and so under his administration, that he that believeth on him shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned,[c]---then it highly concerns every one to know this, that they may believe and call on him as the Almighty Saviour, and honour and obey him as their sovereign Lord and King: But "how shall they call on" and obey "him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent" or commissioned?[d] Here, therefore, he sends forth his apostles as heralds, to proclaim to all the world the dignity of his person and character, to publish his salvation, and to make known to the sons of men the nature and extent of his power, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

b John v. 22, 23. c Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 35, 36.
d Rom. x. 14, 15.

*Plain* INFERENCES *from* CHRIST'S *Power.*

IF Christ is possessed of all power and authority, he must have an undoubted right to the obedience of his servants; and when he gives them a commission, they must be under an indispensible obligation to perform it, whatever difficulties they may have to encounter. "Though I preach the gospel (says Paul) I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."[e]

If his authority is supreme, and extends to heaven and earth, it must necessarily set aside all *adverse* authority, either of men or angels, that would oppose the execution of this commission. Accordingly, when the Jewish council prohibited the apostles from speaking or teaching in the name of Jesus (which was a principal branch of their commission) they boldly rejected and disclaimed their authority, saying, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."[f] And again, "We ought to obey God rather than men."[g]

If *all* power and authority be vested in Christ himself, this excludes not only all rival but also all *conjunct* authority. It admits of no *arbitrary* power in his ministers over their fellow-subjects in managing the affairs of his kingdom. None are allowed to be lords over the heritage in conjunction with him,[h]

e I Cor. ix. 16. f Acts iv. 17, 18. g Acts v. 29. h Mat. xx. 25---28. 1 Pet. v. 3.

for he alone is king. Even the apostles, in executing this commission, had no authority to *teach the nations* any other doctrine than what they had received from him;[i] nor to *baptize* any in their own name, but in his;[k] neither were they to *teach the disciples* their own laws, but "to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them."[l] Nor were they to enforce even these by their own authority: "We preach not ourselves (says Paul) but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."[m] And lest any should think the exercise of the instituted discipline upon offenders a stretch of human authority, the apostle on that subject saith, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy;"[n] it being a power which the Lord had given them to edification, and not to destruction.[o]

Again, if Christ has all power and authority as the great Prophet and Lawgiver of his church, this excludes all *discretionary* power in his servants to make the least alteration either in his doctrine or ordinances. The apostles did not, under pretence of decency, order, or conveniency, elude their Lord's authority, and model the commission agreeably to the corrupt inclinations of men; nor by critically (or rather profanely) torturing his words, did they seek to explain them in a manner most conducive to their own worldly ease, honour, or advantage. They adhered as scrupulously to the form and order, as to

i Gal. i. 8, 9. k 1 Cor. i. 13, 14, 15. l Mat. xxviii. 20
m 2 Cor. iv. 5. n 2 Cor. i. 24. o Chap. x. 8. and xiii. 10.

the matter and scope of the commission. They kept nothing back as being redundant, superfluous, or of little moment; nor did they add any thing to it of their own invention, from a notion that it was in any respect defective; it being every way contrary to their commission to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, which, in matters of religion, must ever make the commandments of God of no effect.[p] In short, every deviation from, alteration of, or addition to, this commission, upon the foot of human authority or discretionary power, is in effect to deny that all power and authority is given unto Christ. It is to say upon the matter, that his laws are improper or imperfect, and may be amended by erring mortals, as if they were wiser than he.

## *Of the* Apostolic Office, *and what was peculiar to it.*

Before we enter upon the commission itself, we shall consider the office and qualifications of those to whom it was at first delivered. It is plain, both from this and the parallel place in Mark's gospel,[q] that Jesus is here addressing his apostles whom he had selected from the other disciples.[r] *Apostle* (αποστολος) is a Greek word, and literally signifies *one who is sent*.[s] The term will apply as well to civil as religious missionaries, and even in the New Testament it is given to others besides the twelve, and rendered *messenger*:[t] yet the first select ministers of

p Mat. xv. 4, 5, 6. q Mat. xxviii. 16. Mark xvi. 14. r Mark iii. 14. Luke vi. 13. s John xiii. 16. t 2 Cor. viii. 23. Philip. ii. 25.

Christ were called *Apostles* by way of eminence, and in distinction from evangelists, pastors, and teachers.[u] It was essential to their office,

1. That they should have *seen the Lord,* and been eye and ear witnesses of what they testified to the world.[x] This is laid down as an essential requisite in the choice of one to succeed Judas.[y] All of them could say, "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you."[z] Paul is no exception here; for speaking of those who saw Christ after his resurrection, he adds, "And last of all he was seen of me."[a] And this he elsewhere mentions as one of his apostolic qualifications: "Am I not an apostle? have I not seen the Lord?"[b] so that his *seeing* that Just One, and *hearing* the voice of his mouth, was necessary to his being a witness of what he thus saw and heard.[c]

2. They must have been *immediately called* and *chosen* to that office by Christ himself. This was the case with every one of them,[d] Matthias not excepted, for as he had been a chosen disciple of Christ before, so the Lord by determining the lot, declared his choice, and immediately called him to the office of apostle.[e]

3. *Infallible inspiration* was also essentially necessary to that office.[f] They had not only to explain the true sense and spirit of the Old Testament,[g]

u 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. Eph. iv. 11. x John xv. 27. y Acts i. 21, 22. z 1 John i 3. a 1 Cor. xv. 8. b 1 Cor. ix. 1. c Acts xxii. 14, 15. d Luke vi. 13. Gal. i. 1. e Acts i. 24--26. f John xvi. 13. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Gal. i. 11, 12. g Luke xxiv. 27. Acts xxvi. 22, 23. and xxviii. 23.

which was hid from the Jewish doctors; but also to give forth the New Testament revelation to the world, which was to be the unalterable standard of faith and practice in all succeeding generations.[h] It was therefore absolutely necessary that they should be secured against all error and mistake by the unerring dictates of the Spirit of truth. Accordingly Christ promised, and actually bestowed upon them, the Spirit—to teach them all things—to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever he had said unto them[i]—to guide them into all truth, and to show them things to come.[k] Their word therefore must be received not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God,[l] and as that whereby we are to distinguish the Spirit of truth from the spirit of error.[m]

4. Another apostolic qualification was the *power of working miracles*;[n] such as speaking with divers tongues, curing the lame, healing the sick, raising the dead, discerning of spirits, conferring these gifts upon others, &c.[o] These were credentials of their apostolic mission; "Truly (says Paul) the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds."[p] Miracles were necessary to confirm their doctrine at its first publication, and to gain credit to it in the world as a revelation from God; and by these God bare them witness.[q]

5. To these qualifications may be added the *uni-*

h 1 Pet. i. 25. 1 John iv. 6. i John xiv 26 k John xvi. 13.
l 1 Thess. ii. 13. m 1 John iv. 6 n Mark xvi. 20. Acts ii 43.
o 1 Cor. xii. 8---11. p 2 Cor. xii. 12. q Heb. ii. 4.

*versality* of their mission. Their charge was not confined to any particular visible church, like that of ordinary pastors; but, being the oracles of God to men, they had the care of all the churches.[r] They had a power to settle their faith and order as models to future ages—to determine all controversies[s]—and to exercise the rod of discipline upon all offenders, whether pastors or flock.[t]

*The Commission not confined to the Apostles.*

THOUGH this commission was at first delivered to the apostles, who have no successors in their office, yet the execution of it was not restricted to their personal ministry, nor to persons so qualified. —Not to their *personal* ministry; for they had many fellow-labourers in performing the different branches of this commission[u]—Nor to persons *so qualified*; for though many of their assistants were possessed of extraordinary gifts, such as evangelists, prophets, &c. yet none of them had the distinguished and peculiar qualifications of apostles, who had the power of conferring these gifts, and of directing the exercise of them.[x] And besides these, there were pastors and teachers appointed for the work of the ministry,[y] among whose essential qualifications none of the extraordinary gifts are mentioned.[z]

Inspiration was at first necessary to reveal the

r 2 Cor. xi. 28. s Acts xvi. 4. t 1 Cor. v. 3---6. 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10. u Acts viii. 1, 4. and xi. 19, 20. 2 Cor. viii. 23. Philip. ii. 25. and iv. 3. 1 Thess. iii. 2. Philem. 1, 2, 24. x Acts viii. 17. and xix. 6. 1 Cor. xii. and xiv. y Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28. z 1 Tim. iii. 1---8. Tit. i. 5---10.

gospel, and miracles to confirm it. The apostles were eminently qualified in both these respects. But when the gospel-revelation with all its evidence was completed by their ministry, and committed to writing, there was no further use for these *extraordinary* gifts, because the Scriptures of the New Testament answer all the ends for which such gifts were originally bestowed; and accordingly they have ceased, as was foretold.[a] The work enjoined in this commission, however, was not to cease with the gifts of inspiration and miracles, but to devolve upon a succession of faithful men who should be able to teach others.[b] These are the standing and ordinary pastors and teachers whom Christ hath *appointed* as stewards over his house,[c] and who are to be engaged in executing this *commission* until his second coming.[d] That this is a work intended for ordinary teachers, and competent for them to perform, is plain from the commission itself, and the *promise* annexed to it.

There is no part of the commission itself which men possessed of ordinary gifts cannot now perform. They can *preach the gospel* contained in the Scriptures to every creature, and produce the evidence by which it was at first confirmed: they can *baptize* disciples upon a profession of their faith; and they can form them into churches in separation from the world, *teaching them to observe all things* whatsoever Christ hath commanded in his word.

a 1 Cor. xiii. 8--11. b 2 Tim. ii. 2. c Tit. i. 7. d Luke xii. 41---45.

The promise annexed is, "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world." This promise cannot be restricted to the apostles personally; for these were not to remain on earth to the end of the world: Nor can it be confined to a succession of men endowed with miraculous gifts; for Christ knew that such gifts were soon to cease: Neither can it respect merely the apostolic writings; for though these will continue to the end of the world, as a complete and unalterable rule of faith and practice, and have Christ's blessing attending them to the latest posterity, yet it cannot be said that Jesus is here addressing himself to writings, commanding them to preach and baptize, and promising only to be with them. This promise evidently respects *persons* who should be *actively* employed in his service, and was made to the apostles in the first place, and in them to all succeeding teachers who shall faithfully prosecute the same work to the end of the world, according to the rules laid down in the apostolic writings.

But it ought to be noticed, that this commission is given only to *teachers*. All Christ's disciples are not teachers;[d] all have not the scriptural character and qualifications necessary to that office.[e] Though men should think themselves qualified, nay though they should actually be so; yet, if they are not called and ordained according to the scripture rule, they cannot regularly execute this commission: for "how shall they preach, except they be

d 1 Cor. xii. 29. e 1 Tim. iii. 1---8. Tit. i. 6---10. f Rom. x. 15.

sent,"[f] either *immediately* by Christ himself, as the apostles were, to which none can now reasonably pretend, or *mediately* by such as he hath appointed to judge of their qualifications, and to set them apart to that work?[g]

g Acts xiv. 23. Tit. i. 5. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

# PART I.

## THE MEANING AND EXTENT OF THIS PART OF THE COMMISSION, HOW THE APOSTLES EXECUTED IT, AND WHAT IT WAS THEY TAUGHT THE NATIONS.

*Go ye therefore and teach all nations.*

WE are indeed expressly forbidden to strive about words, but this prohibition respects only such strife as tends to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers.[h] Every word of God is pure; and as the whole counsel of God is communicated to us by words, so our faith and practice must be regulated by the sense in which we understand them. We cannot therefore contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, without contending at the same time for the sense of the form of sound words wherein that faith was delivered.

Jesus here commands his apostles to "teach all nations." The original word μαθητευσατε is rightly rendered *teach*, and is never used in a sense which excludes it. We have the same word in Acts xiv. 21. "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and (μαθητευσαντες) *had taught* many."—Here the *means* used determine the sense. They taught many; how? the text informs us it was by *preaching the gospel*. We find this word also in Matth. xiii. 52.

h 2 Tim. ii. 14.

"Therefore every scribe (μαθητευθεις) *who is instructed* unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old." Here the sense is clear from the *effect*. The scribe by being instructed acquires a *treasure* of knowledge, from which he *bringeth forth* instruction to others. It no doubt imports *to make disciples*;* but (μαθητης) *disciple* is not an arbitrary designation: it signifies *a learner*, or *one who is taught*, which is expressive of *teaching* as the cause; so that a person can no more be a disciple without being taught, than he can be a convert without being converted. To *make disciples* is neither less nor more than to *teach with effect*. It is plain therefore that μαθητευειν properly signifies *to teach*, and it only imports *to make disciples* as the effect of teaching.

And what demonstrates this beyond all possibility of doubt, is the parallel place in Mark's gospel,[i] where, instead of the words *teach all nations*, the expression is *preach the gospel to every creature*. Indeed if μαθητευσατε were not a command to preach the gospel, the commission as recorded by Matthew, would be deficient as to the principal part of the apostolic mission; for the teaching afterwards mentioned, verse 20. does not so much respect the doctrine to be *believed* as the commands and ordinances to be *observed* by those who are already made disciples, as shall be shown in its proper place.

* Μαθητευω, of μανθανω, *to teach* or *learn*, whence comes μαθητης *disciple*, i. e. a learner, scholar, or one taught; even as the English word *disciple* comes of the Latin verb *discere*, to learn.

i Mark xvi. 15

Further, the word in this place cannot so properly be rendered *disciple* as *teach*, because it respects *all nations*, and our Lord well knew, that *all the nations* of this world, would not actually be made disciples according to his own description of such.[k] He can therefore only mean, that they should *teach* or *preach the gospel* to all nations, and by this means make disciples among them.

### *The Extent of this Part of the Commission*—ALL NATIONS.

WHEN Jesus formerly sent forth his disciples to heal diseases, and preach that the kingdom of God was at hand, he restricted their commission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and forbad them to go into the way of the Gentiles.[l] To old Israel, in distinction from the nations, belonged the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises; and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.[m] Therefore the promises which God had made unto their fathers were to be accomplished to them in the first place;[n] and so Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.[o] Hence, in reference to his personal ministry upon earth, he says to the woman of Canaan, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[p] Though the gospel had

k John viii. 31. x. 27. xiii. 35. xv. 18. and xviii. 37. Luke xiv. 27.
l Mat. x. 5, 6. m Rom. ix. 4, 5. n Acts iii. 25. and xiii. 32, 33. o Rom. xv. 8. p Mat. xv. 24.

been preached before to Abraham respecting the nations,[q] and though the Jewish prophets had foretold that God would call them to partake of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom;[r] yet this could not take place until Christ by his death had abolished the old peculiar covenant with Israel, and established the new covenant in his blood with his people of all nations,[s] and until he had ascended on high, and taken possession of his kingdom, which came in place of the Jewish theocracy, and included the heathen for an inheritance.[t] Till then the Gentiles were without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world.[u] But Christ, having made peace by the blood of his cross, and broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles,[x] sent forth his apostles with a more extensive commission, preaching peace to them that were afar off, as well as to them that were nigh.[y] He commanded them to *go into all the world*, and not to Judea only; to *preach the gospel to every creature*, and not the Jews only; *to teach all nations*, or to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name *among all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem.[z]

But though their commission to preach the gospel extended to all nations without exception, yet we must not hence infer, that Christ intended to take all the nations of this world, or any one of them, as such, for his church and kingdom; for he hath expressly declared, that his kingdom is not of this

q Gal. iii. 8. r Isa. xlix. 6. s Rom. ix. 8, 24, 25, 26.
t Psal. ii. 8. u Eph. ii. 12. x Eph. ii. 14, 15. y Eph. ii. 17
z Mark xvi. 15. Luke xxiv. 47.

world,[a] as earthly nations certainly are, whatever shape they may assume. He distinguishes his people from the world as not of it, but chosen out of it,[b] and foretels they shall be hated of *all nations* for his name's sake.[c] The promise made to Abraham of blessing *all nations* in his seed (Christ,) does not respect such political bodies of men as constitute earthly nations, but only the nations of them that are saved;[d] a great multitude, which no man can number, of *all nations*, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.[e] Old Israel were indeed the church and kingdom of God, though a nation of this world; but, as a nation, they were only a figure of his true church and kingdom; and the old temporal covenant whereby they were related to God, was but a type of the new covenant in Christ's blood. The nations of this world are neither typically nor spiritually related to God as his church and kingdom. Not *typically;* for that relation was peculiar to the fleshly seed of Abraham by the old covenant, which is now done away:[f]---Nor *spiritually;* for that is peculiar to the subjects of the new covenant; who are described as all knowing the Lord from the least to the greatest, as having his law in their hearts, and their iniquities forgiven.[g] When our Lord foretels that the kingdom of God should be taken from the Jews, he does not say it should be given to any other earthly nation such as they, but "to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."[h] The chosen generation, royal

a John xviii. 36. b John xv. 19. c Mat. xxiv. 9.
d Rev. xxi. 24. e Rev. vii. 9. f Heb. viii. 9, 13. Gal. iv. 30.
g Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12. h Mat. xxi. 43.

priesthood, holy nation, and peculiar people which came in place of old Israel,[i] are described as "elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."[k] They are indeed termed *a holy nation* as being the antitype of the nation of Israel, but they had no earthly national form or establishment; on the contrary, the apostle calls them "strangers scattered abroad,[l]—strangers and pilgrims," and exhorts them, as such, to have their conversation honest among (εθνεσιν) the nations, and to imitate Christ in patiently suffering their hatred.[m] The words of the prophets respecting the nations began to be accomplished when God did visit them, not to take them in gross, or by nations, but (λαζειν εξ εθνων λαον) "*to take out of the nations a people* for his name."[n] Christ therefore has his nation of redeemed ones among all nations of the earth. For them he prays, and not for the world; and describes them as *believing* on him through the word of his apostles.[o]—For their sakes he commands the gospel to be preached to every creature; and to them he expressly restricts the saving benefit of it: "He that *believeth*, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that *believeth not*, shall be damned."[p]

From these hints we may learn what to think of national or political establishments of Christianity; and judge how far they consist with the nature of

i Compare Exod. xix. 5, 6. with 1 Pet. ii. 9. k 1 Pet. i. 2.
l 1 Pet. i. 1. m 1 Pet. ii. 11—25. n Acts xv. 14. 15.
o John xvii. 9, 20. p Mark xvi. 16.

Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world, or with that visible separation from the world in religious fellowship to which he calls his disciples.[q]

Though the heathen is given to Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession ; yet he will not actually inherit all nations till Satan is bound, and all opposing rule, authority and power is put down.[a] Then indeed "the kingdoms of this world will become our Lord's and his Christ's ; and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."[b] But this kingdom in its most extensive and prosperous state will not change its nature, but will still be spiritual and heavenly as at its first erection, and so essentially different from worldly kingdoms, and the direct opposite of that kind of spiritual domination which claims the sanction, support and enforcement of civil power.

*How the Apostles executed this Part of the Commission.*

It will be allowed by all Christians, that the apostles (at least after they were fully instructed by the unerring Spirit) both understood and executed their Lord's commission according to its true intent and meaning ; and if so, their practice will furnish us with the best comment upon it.

q Acts xix. 9 — 2 Cor. vi. 14---18. — Heb. xiii. 13, 14
a Rev. xx. 1---5. — Chap. xix. 19, 20. — 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25
b Rev. xi. 15. — Dan. vii. 27.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out upon them from the risen and glorified Jesus, as he had promised. Immediately they began to speak with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance ; so that the vast multitude from all nations, then at Jerusalem, were amazed when they heard the illiterate Galileans speak to each of them the grand things of God in his own tongue wherein he was born.[r] This miraculous gift of tongues was a qualification answerable to the nature and extent of their mission ; for they could not *teach all nations* without speaking their different languages.

Being now qualified for their work, they began their ministry at Jerusalem as they had been commanded ;[s] and Peter's first discourse was attended with the conversion of three thousand.[t] Soon after Peter and John preached in the temple to a numerous audience with still greater success ;[u] and being apprehended and brought before the Jewish council, because they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead, they still went on with their work even in the presence of the council, and refused to desist, notwithstanding all their threatenings.[x] Again they were apprehended and imprisoned ; but were set at liberty by an angel, who commanded them to speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.[y] While thus engaged, they were brought a second time before the sanhedrim, and charged with having filled Jerusalem with their doctrine ; but instead of being

r Acts ii. 3---12. s Luke xxiv. 47. t Acts ii. 29---42.
u Chap. iii. 12---26. x Chap. iv. 1---23. y Chap. v. 17---26.

intimidated, they boldly disclaimed the authority of their judges in that matter, and openly avowed their steady resolution to persevere. Though beaten, they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name. Though strictly prohibited from speaking any more in the name of Jesus, yet daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.[z] Stephen the deacon taught with such evidence and energy, that none were able to resist the spirit with which he spoke; which so exasperated his adversaries, that they soon brought him to seal his testimony with his blood.[b] This was the commencement of a great persecution against the church at Jerusalem, by which many of them were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, and went every where publishing the gospel.[c] Of those teachers some travelled as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only;[d] for as yet they did not fully understand the extent of the commission, till God directed Peter to preach the gospel to Cornelius and his house, and testified his acceptance of them by giving them the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.[e] This convinced the apostles and Jewish converts that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life;[f] and though they continued afterwards to make their first addresses to their countrymen,[g] yet they no longer con-

z Acts v. 27---42. a Chap. vi. 8---12. b Chap. vii. 59, 60.
c Chap. viii. 1, 4. d Chap. xi. 19. e Chap. x. 20---48. and xv. 7---10. f Chap. xi. 18. g Acts xiii. 5---14. xiv. 1. xvii. 1, 2, 10, 17. xviii. 4, 5, 19. and xix. 8.

fined the gospel to them, but published it to every creature, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.[h]

We have a particular account of the travels of Paul and his fellow-labourers in teaching the nations. Paul was in an especial manner chosen to that work. He preached the gospel first at Damascus;[k] afterwards in Arabia,[l] Jerusalem,[a] Syria, and Cilicia ;[m] then at Antioch in Pisidia,[n] Iconium,[o] Lystra, Derbe,[p] Perga,[q] Philippi,[r] Thessalonica,[s] Berea,[t] Athens,[u] and Corinth ;[x] at which last place he and his companions continued a year and six months teaching the word of God.[y] After this he preached at Ephesus near three years ; so that all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.[z] Reciting his own travels and labours, he says, " From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ."[a] He had not then been at Rome; but, being afterwards sent there a prisoner he continued two whole years in that city preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.[b]

Sacred history does not furnish us with so full an account of the labours and travels of the other apostles and their assistants; but we may be sure they prosecuted their mission with unwearied diligence and

h Rom. i. 16. i Acts ix. 15. xxii. 21. and xxvi. 17, 18. Rom. xi. 13. k Acts ix. 20---23. l Gal. i. 17. a Acts ix. 29. m Gal. i. 21. n Acts xiii. 14---49. o Chap. xiv. 1, 3. p Chap. xiv. 6, 7, 21. q Chap. xiv. 25. r Chap. xvi. 9, 13, 32. s Chap. xvii. 2, 3, 4. t Chap. xvii. 10, 11, 12. u Ver. 17, &c. x Chap. xviii. 4, 5, y Ver. 11. z Chap. xix. 8, 10. and xx. 31. a Rom. xv. 19. b Acts xxviii. 30, 31

fidelity in different parts of the world.* Peter writes his first epistle from Babylon;[c] and the gospel was received at Rome before Paul went there, and so must have been published by some others.[d] Our Lord foretold, that the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, before the destruction of Jerusalem,[e] *i. e.* within forty years; and about nine years before that dreadful event, Paul tells the Colossians that this had actually been accomplished.[f] So rapid and universal was the spread of the gospel, that the same apostle applies what is said of the heavenly luminaries to the publishers of it: "Their sound went unto all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."[g] Thus we see how the apostles and their assistants executed the first part of the commission in teaching all nations.

* It appears from the most credible records, that the gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt, Mamorica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simeon, and Jude; in Ethiopia by the Eunuch and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighbouring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the seven Asiatic churches by John; in Parthia by Matthew; in Scythia by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simeon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas; from Jerusalem to Illyricum, by Paul, as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain. In most of which places Christian churches were planted in less than thirty years after Christ, and ten before the destruction of Jerusalem.

*Ar. Young on Idolatry*, vol. ii. p. 216---234.

c 1 Pet. v. 13. d Rom. i 10---14. e Mat. xxiv. 14.
f Col. i. 6, 23 g Psal. xix. 4. Rom. x. 18.

### *The* SUBJECT-MATTER *of the Apostolic Doctrine, or what it was they taught the Nations.*

THEY were commissioned to go into all the world, and preach the gospel (*i. e.* to publish the glad tidings of salvation) to every creature[h]—to preach repentance and remission of sins in Christ's name among all nations.[i] As pardon has no meaning but in relation to guilt, nor salvation but as it respects danger or misery, it will be needful here to premise a few things.

That man was originally created upright and happy, the word of God clearly testifies;[k] that his present state is the sad reverse, experience as well as scripture sufficiently evince. But how this change took place can only be learnt from revelation. This informs us, That by the one offence, or disobedience of the first man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passsed (εἰς) unto all men (ἐφ' ᾧ,) in whom all have sinned:[l]—That hereby the whole of Adam's posterity are become naturally sinful as well as mortal, being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin;[m] alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts;[n] enemies to God in their minds by wicked works;[o] walking according to the instigations of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of dis-

h Mark xvi. 15. i Luke xxiv. 47. k Gen. i. 26, 27. Eccl. vii. 29. l Rom. v. 12. m Psal li. 5. n Eph. iv. 18. o Col. i. 21.

obedience,[p] by whom they are blinded and taken captive at his will:[q] And being thus dead in trespasses and sins,[r] and wholly corrupted in their sentiments, dispositions, and practices, they are not only deprived of a sense of the Divine favour, subjected to the toils and miseries of this life, and doomed to return to the dust, according to the sentence pronounced upon Adam's *one offence*,[s] but are also liable to the curse of God's violated law,[t] and to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power in the world to come, for their own *many offences*.[u]

All mankind without exception are by nature in this guilty, helpless, and miserable state. The *Gentiles* by sinning against the manifestation of God in his visible works, and the natural notices of his law in their consciences, were worthy of death.[x]—The *Jews*, though more highly favoured than the former, in having the written law of God, were in no respect better than they; for by transgressing that law, they dishonoured God, and so were equally obnoxious to his just displeasure.[y] The law, which demanded perfect love to God and their neighbour, manifested at the same time their guilt and the curse due to every the least failure;[z] so that, instead of justifying them, it gave the knowledge of sin, made the offence abound, and ministered death and condemnation,[a] Thus the scripture concludes all the world, both

p Eph. ii. 2. s Gen. iii. 16. Mat. xxv. 41, 46. and iii. 9---20. 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9
q 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 16. t Gal. iii. 10. x Rom. i. 18---32. z Gal. iii. 10.
r Eph. ii. 1. u Eph. v. 6. 2 Thess. i. 9. y Chap. ii. 17---25. a Rom. iii. 20. and v. 20.

Jews and Gentiles, under sin, and unable either to atone for their past offences, or to obey perfectly in time to come; and so are condemned by the law, and obnoxious to the everlasting wrath and righteous judgment of God.

The design, however, of this melancholy but just representation, is to make men duly sensible of their guilt and wretchedness, and by this means to recommend to them the righteousness of God in justifying the ungodly freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.[b] Were there no revelation of mercy, the knowledge of our lost condition could serve no other purpose than to increase our misery. Hence those who believe not the gospel are averse to admit the scripture account of sin and its consequences, because it lands them in absolute despair. None can have a just view or estimation of the gospel-salvation, but such as have a proper conviction of sin and its demerit; for these are relative, and answer to each other like disease and remedy. Every attempt, therefore, to extenuate the guilt and wretchedness of our natural state, must in proportion derogate from the great salvation, and betray our ignorance of, or disaffection to it. None will really believe or love the gospel but such as absolutely despair of relief from any other quarter, and are shut up to it alone as exhibiting the sole and all-sufficient remedy. Such only can discern the wisdom, necessity, and suitableness of that glorious plan of Divine mercy and grace, and find all their salvation and desire in it.

b Rom. iii. 21, 24.

Having premised these things, let us now see what the apostles taught the nations.

## THE GOSPEL.

THE subject of their message has several epithets given to it in scripture, which are all expressive of its general nature. It is called (ευαγγελιον) the *evangel*, or *gospel* which signifies a good message or glad tidings, as the same word is sometimes rendered.[c] —The *gospel of peace*;[d] because it proclaims peace with God to guilty rebels through Jesus Christ.— The *word of reconciliation*;[e] because it shows how God is reconciled to sinners, and contains the great motive or argument for reconciling their minds to him.[f]—The *gospel of salvation*;[g] because it holds forth salvation or deliverance to the lost or miserable. —The *gospel of the grace of God*;[h] as being a declaration of God's free favour and unmerited love and good-will to the utterly worthless and undeserving. —The *gospel of the kingdom*;[i] because it proclaims the power and dominion of the Messiah, and the nature and privileges of his kingdom, which is not of this world.—It is termed *the truth*,[k] not only as being the most important of all truths, and the testimony of God who cannot lie;[l] but also because it is the accomplishment of Old Testament prophecies,[m] and the substance, spirit, and truth of all the shadows and types of the former economy.[n]

c Luke ii. 10. Acts xiii. 32. d Rom. x. 5. e 2 Cor. v. 19.
f Ver. 20, 21. g Eph. i. 13. h Acts xx. 24. i Mat.
xxiv. 14. k John xviii. 37. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 John 2. 21.
l 1 John v. 9. m Rev. xix. 10 n John i. 17. Col. ii. 17.

A general idea of the gospel may also be formed from the short summaries given of it in various parts of the New Testament. Jesus sums up the gospel to Nicodemus thus: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."[o] Paul gives several brief compends of the gospel, from which we shall select the following: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you—by the which also ye are saved—how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures."[p]—"God hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. For he hath made him (ἁμαρτιαν) a sin-offering* for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God† in him."[q]—"This is a faithful saying, and worthy

* To make a beast *a sin-offering* is, in the sacrifical style of the law, (ποιειν ἁμαρτιαν) *to make it sin.* see LXX. Lev. iv. 20. Numb. vi. 11. and viii. 12. which is the very expression here used by the Apostle, and must therefore signify that Christ was *made a sacrifice for our sins.*

† To be *made the righteousness of God in him,* is to be pardoned, justified, or accepted through his sacrifice or blood-shedding; so it is said, "By the obedience of one shall many be (κατασταθησονται) *constituted* righteous." Rom. v. 19.

o John iii. 14. 15, 16. p 1 Cor. xv. 1—5. q 2 Cor. v. 19, 21.

of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."[r]—John gives the substance of the gospel-testimony in these words: "This is the record (μαρτυρια, witness or testimony,) That God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life."[s]

In the history of the Acts, we have three remarkable sermons of the apostles, which may serve as a specimen both of their doctrine and of the beautiful and artless simplicity with which they delivered it. As every one has a Bible, I shall not here transcribe them; but the reader is desired to peruse them with attention at his leisure. The first is Peter's discourse to the Jews at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured down from the glorified Messiah. Chap. ii. 22—40.—The next is Peter's discourse to Cornelius, his house, and kinsmen, when God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name, and made choice among the apostles, that by Peter's mouth they should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. Chap. x. 34—44.—The last is Paul's sermon, first to the Jews, and then to the Gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia. Chap. xiii. 23—42. These discourses contain a few plain facts respecting Jesus; such as, that he sprung from David according to the flesh, and was the royal seed promised to him:[t]—That he was approved of God as the Messiah by the miracles, wonders, and signs which God did by him:[u]—That he suffered the

r 1 Tim. i. 15. s 1 John v. 11, 12. t Acts ii. 30. and xiii. 23.
u Chap. ii. 22. and x. 38.

death of the cross,[x]—was buried,[y]—was raised again from the dead on the third day,[z]—and exalted at the right hand of God, being made both Lord and Christ:[a]—That he was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead;[b] and that whosoever believeth on him shall receive the remission of sins and eternal life:[c]—All which particulars are shown to be the exact accomplishment of the predictions of the Old Testament.[d]

As these apostolic sermons were dictated by the unerring Spirit of truth sent down from heaven, and were attended with remarkable success in the conversion of multitudes ordained to eternal life, we may reasonably conclude, that they contain every essential article of the one faith, and all that is absolutely necessary to be believed unto salvation. And here we might close this branch of our subject: But as there is still much room for true believers to go on to perfection, and to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,[e] we shall consider the import and connection of these first principles as more fully opened and explained in the rest of the apostolic writings.

The whole gospel may be comprised under the two following heads:

I. A TESTIMONY respecting the person, mission, and work of Jesus Christ.

x Acts ii. 23. x. 39 and xiii. 27, 28. y Chap. xiii. 29. z Chap. ii. 24---33. x. 40, 41. and xiii. 30, 31. a Chap. ii. 33---37. and x. 36. b Chap. x. 42. c Chap. ii. 38---41. x. 43. and xiii. 38, 39, 46, 47. d Chap. ii. 25---36. x. 43. and xiii. 32---38. e Heb. vi. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 18. Eph. iv. 12---16.

II. A PROMISE of the remission of sins and everlasting life to all who believe on him.

I. The TESTIMONY concerning the *person* and *mission* of Jesus is frequently contained in one short proposition; such as, "That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God." This is the grand foundation truth of the gospel which supports all the rest, and in the confirmation of which all the lines of evidence unite. To this truth gave all the *prophets* witness;[f] for as the descriptions they gave beforehand of the Messiah exactly apply to Jesus, and to him only, they clearly prove him to be the Christ the Son of God. When he actually came in the flesh, *John the Baptist* (the messenger who went before his face to prepare his way) proclaimed this truth as the substance of his testimony: "And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God."[g] It was also the principal subject of the *apostles'* testimony. John giving the scope of his gospel, says, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God."[h] Peter sums up his discourse to the Jews thus: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ."[i] The scope of Paul's preaching was to prove, "That Jesus was very Christ—the Son of God."[k] This is the truth testified by the *Divine Three*.[l] The Fa-

f Acts x. 43. g John i. 34. h Chap. xx. 31.
i Acts ii. 36. k Chap. ix. 20, 22. and xviii. 5. l 1 John v. 5—10.

ther proclaimed from the excellent glory that Jesus was his beloved Son, and determined him to be so by raising him from the dead.[m] Jesus himself witnessed the same confession,[n] proved it by his miracles,[o] and sealed it with his blood.[p] The Holy Spirit also concurred in this testimony, by descending and abiding on Jesus,[q] revealing this truth to the apostles,[r] and confirming the declaration of it with his miraculous gifts.[s]—This truth is that rock upon which Christ promises to build his church,[t] which his disciples confessed as their faith, and with the belief of which salvation is connected.[u]—We shall now consider its import.

1. The declaration that JESUS is the Christ evidently points out that particular person whose name is Jesus, even Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Mary, as the promised and expected Messiah, in distinction from every other man. The Jews believed that the Messiah was to come, and were looking for him about the time in which he appeared;[x] but they did not believe that this Jesus was the person, and so their faith was of no avail; for he tells them, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."[y] It was not enough to believe that Christ was to come, or even that he had already come, unless they also believed that Jesus was he. Without this they might

m Mat. iii. 17. and xvii. 5. Rom. i. 4. n John iv. 26. ix. 35, 37. and x. 36. o John x. 25. p Mat. xxvi. 63---67 Luke xxii. 66---71. John xviii. 37. with xix. 7. q John i. 32, 33 Acts x. 38. r John xvi. 13. s John xv. 26. Acts v. 32 Heb. ii. 4. t Mat. xvi. 8. u Mat. xvi. 16. John vi. 69 Acts viii. 37. x Luke iii. 15. John iv. 25, 29. and vii. 41, 42 Acts xxvi. 7. y John viii. 24.

still be looking for another, or embrace an impostor, instead of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world. The apostles therefore testified and proved to the Jews, that Jesus was the very Christ whom they were expecting, in whom all the prophecies were fulfiled;[z] that that very individual Jesus whom they had crucified was he:[g] and, to cut off all their expections from any other, Peter says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby ye must be saved."[a]

2. When of this Jesus it is affirmed, that he is the CHRIST, or Anointed, it imports his mediatorial character and offices. Under the law men were consecrated to, and invested with offices by pouring upon their heads the holy oil, which was prepared by Divine appointment, and kept sacred to that use:[b] hence they were called the Lord's Messiahs or Christs, *i. e.* anointed ones;[c] in which character they typified God's true Christ, Jesus of Nazareth, whom he hath anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power,[d] with the oil of gladness above his fellows,[e] as head over all things to his church.

He is the anointed *Prophet* or *Teacher* sent from God, by whom he has spoken unto us in these last days.[f] So when he opens his prophetic mission, he says, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the

z Acts ix. 22. g Chap. ii. 36. a Chap. v. 12.
b Exod. xxix. 7. and xxviii. 41. 1 Sam. x. 1. and xvi. 13. c 1 Sam. xxiv. 10. and xxiii. 1. Ps. cv. 15. d Acts x. 38. e Heb. i. 9.
f Heb. i. 2.

poor ; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised ; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."[g] This is that prophet whom the Lord promised to raise up like unto Moses, and whom we are commanded to hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto us.[h]

He is the anointed *High-Priest* over the house of God ;[i] who having laid down his life once as a sacrifice for the sins of his people,[k] hath risen from the dead, and entered into the heavenly holy place with his own blood,[l] being, by the word of the oath which was since the law, consecrated for evermore an immortal High-priest in the heavens after the order of Melchisedec ; where he continues to officiate as a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle ; and is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.[m]

He is the anointed *King* whom God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion,[n] and to whom he hath given all power and dominion in heaven and in earth.[o] Indeed it is to his kingly character that the title *Christ* or *Messiah* more especially applies. It comes originally from the covenant of royalty which God made with David, wherein he swore unto him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins according to the

g Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18, 19. h Deut. xviii. 15---20. Acts iii. 22. i Heb. x. 21. k 1 Pet. iii. 18. l Heb. ix. 12, 24. m Heb. vii. 20---28. and viii. 1, 2. n Psal. ii. 6. o Mat. xxviii. 18.

flesh he would raise up Christ to sit for ever on his throne;[p] and so David gives him that title, when foretelling his sufferings and his following glory and dominion.[q] All the succeeding prophecies of the Messiah, as a king, have a retrospect to this promise made unto David; and are just so many renewals, enlargements, and illustrations of it.[r] The gospel applies the whole directly to Jesus, testifying that he is the Christ or royal seed promised unto David, in whom the prophecies have their accomplishment.[s] The Jews did not believe this testimony; they understood not the prophecies concerning the humiliation and sufferings of the Messiah,[t] and so were prejudiced at the mean appearance of Jesus.[u] Those which foretold his exaltation, kingdom and government, they applied to a kingdom of this world; and finding nothing in Jesus answerable to their carnal expectations, but every thing the reverse, they rejected him, as was also foretold.[x] But in the New Testament account of Jesus, the most lofty and sublime predictions of the Messiah are, without any hyperbole, realized in their fullest sense; the consistency and connection of his lowest abasement with his highest glory are clearly unfolded, as well as the important ends of both: Ends, the most worthy of

p 2 Sam. vii 11---17. 1 Chron. xvii. 9---15. q Psal. ii. 2. Acts iv. 26, 27. r Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, 35, 36. Psal. cxxxii. 11. Isa. ix. 6, 7. xi. 1---10. and lv. 1---5. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. and xxxiii. 14---26. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. and xxxvii. 24, 25. Hos. iii. 5. s Luke i. 31, 32, 33, 68, 69, 70. Acts ii. 30---37. and xiii. 23, 33, 34, 35. Heb. i. 5---10. t Psal. xxii. Psal. lxix. Isa. lii. 14. and liii. Dan. ix. 26. Zech. xiii. 7. u Psal. lxix. 8. Isa. liii. 2. x Chap. viii. 14, 15. and liii. 3. John i. 10, 11. Rom. ix. 32, 33. Acts iv. 11. Psal. cxviii. 22.

God, honourable to Jesus, and beneficial to men, and such as infinitely transcend all the natural conceptions of the human mind. "For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."[y] And in pursuance of this gracious design, the Divine WORD (εαυτον εκενωσε) "emptied himself" of the the form of God wherein he originally existed, "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For this cause God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."[z] Thus he "who was made (βραχυ τι) a little while lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, was crowned with glory and honour,[a] angels, authorities and powers being made subject unto him;"[b] and thus the promise to David was fulfilled when God raised up Jesus from the dead to sit for ever on his heavenly throne,[c] and said unto him, "Sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."[d] In this exalted

y Heb. ii. 10. z Philip. ii. 6---12. a Heb. ii. 9.
b 1 Pet. iii. 22. c Acts ii. 24---37. and xiii. 32---38. d Psal. cx. 1. Acts ii. 34, 35. Heb. i. 13.

state he is invested with sovereign power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him ;[e] and must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet,[f] and judged the quick and the dead according to their works.[g] His kingdom is not of this world, like the ancient kingdom of David, which was only its type ; nor is it defended or promoted by the sword, but by bearing witness unto the truth ; and his true subjects are only such as are of the truth and hear his voice.[h]

3. When Jesus the Christ is declared to be the SON OF GOD, it imports,

That he is truly GOD. The Jews who saw him a man, but did not believe him to be God, charged him with blasphemy in calling himself the Son of God ; which they rightly understood to be making himself equal with God, or, being a man, to be making himself God.[i] As they called themselves the sons of God,[k] and their rulers were termed gods in their law,[l] they could not charge him with blasphemy for saying that he was the Son of God either in a federal or official sense ; but when they heard him affirming that he and his Father were one,[m] that he did the works peculiar to God,[n] and so claiming the same divine honour with his Father,[o] they concluded, that he called God his Father in such a sense as would be blasphemy in any mere creature ;

e John. xvii. 2. f 1 Cor. xv. 25. g Acts x. 42. Rev. xx. 13. h John xviii. 36, 37. i Chap. v. 18. and x. 33. k Chap. viii. 41. l Exod. xxii. 28. m John x. 30. n Chap. x. 37. o Chap. x. 23.

and so condemned him to die by their law against blasphemy, "because he made himself the Son of God.[p]" His disciples also in confessing their faith, express their highest notions of his person by calling him the Son of God,[q] and worshipped him as such.[r] Every thing whereby the true God is made known or distinguished from his creatures is ascribed unto the Son.—1. Every divine *name* is given unto him, excepting such as serve to mark the other two personal distinctions. He is expressly called GOD: "Make straight in the desert a way for our God."[s]—"Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God."[t] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.[u]"—"Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.[x]"—"God was manifest in the flesh.[y]"—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."[z] And that he is God in the strictest sense, is evident from his being called the *Mighty* God,[a]—the *great* God,[b]—*over all* God blessed for ever.[c] The incommunicable name JEHOVAH is given unto him. "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah."[e]—"Jehovah of hosts."[f]—"Jehovah our Righteousness."[g] By what names or titles shall we know the true God if these distinguish him not? 2. Every essential and incommunicable divine *perfection* is ascribed to him:

p John xix. 7. q Mat. xvi. 16. John vi. 69. Acts viii. 37
r John ix. 35---39. s Isa. xl. 3. t Ver. 9, 10. u John i. 1
x Acts xx. 28. y 1 Tim. iii. 16. z Heb. i. 8. a Isa. ix. 6.
b Tit. ii. 13. c Rom. ix. 5. e Isa. xl. 3. with Luke iii. 4.
f Isa. vi. 3, 5. with John xii. 41. g Jer. xxiii. 6.

such as, eternity,[h]—immutability,[i]—omnipresence,[k]—omnipotence,[l]—omniscience,[m]—knowing the thoughts,[n]—and searching the reins and heart."[o] 3. Every divine *work* is attributed to him; such as creation,[p]—upholding all things,[q]—raising the dead,[r] judging the world.[s] Now creation is the exclusive and immediate work of God,[t] and by this the eternal power and Godhead of the First Cause are clearly seen.[u] It is God who quickeneth the dead;[x] it is God himself that is judge.[y] 4. Religious *honour* and divine *worship* belong unto him; this he claims even as the Father.[z] Christians are denominated *callers upon his name*;[a] and they actually did so.[b] Stephen and the thief on the cross commended their departing spirits unto him.[c] The highest order of created beings are commanded to worship him;[d] accordingly he is worshipped in heaven in conjunction with the Father.[e] Yet divine worship and honour belong only to God.[f] Whatever else, therefore, is imported in the name Son of God, it implies in the first place that he is really a divine person.

It also imports that he is truly MAN as well as

h Isa. xliv. 6. with Rev. i. 8. and xxii. 13. Mic. v. 2. Col. i. 17. 1 Tim. i. 17. i Heb. i. 12. and xiii. 8. k Mat. xviii. 20. and xxviii. 20. l Rev. i. 8. m John xxi. 17. n Mat. ix. 34. Mark. ii. 6, 8. John ii. 24, 25. o Rev. ii. 24. p John i. 1—4. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2, 10. Rev. iv. 11. q Heb. i. 3. r John v. 21, 28. s 2 Tim. iv. 1. t Isa. xliv. 24. u Rom. i. 19—21. x Rom. iv. 17. y Psal. l. 6. z John v. 23. a Acts ix. 14, 21. 1 Cor. i. 2. b Mat. viii. 25. xiv. 33. and xv. 25, 28. Luke xvii. 5. John ix. 38. Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. c Luke xxiii. 42. Acts vii. 59. d Psal. xcvii. 7. with Heb. i. 6. Isa. xlv. 22—25 with Rom. xiv. 10, 11. Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11. e Rev. v. 8, &c. f Mat. iv. 10.

God. The scripture clearly holds forth the eternal pre-existence and Godhead of his person, as has been shown; but it does not seem to give us a view of his sonship altogether abstract from his humanity. He is expressly called the Son of God on account of his incarnation. The angel, fortelling the birth of him who was to be called *the Son of the Highest*, thus explains to the Virgin his divine generation: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; (διο και) AND THEREFORE that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called THE SON OF GOD."[g] Here is a plain reason given for his being called the Son of God. That holy thing conceived and brought forth by the Virgin was not a human person, but Emmanuel, *i. e.* God with us.[h] The child born and son given was the Mighty God,[i]—the Saviour Christ the Lord,[k]—the Word made flesh,[l]—God manifested in the flesh.[m] If such was the person born, then this passage gives the reason, not why his human nature alone, but why his whole person, now constituted of both natures, is denominated the Son of God. We perceive not the chief glory of this great mystery of godliness, if we view it only as a miraculous conception of his human nature. The Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, and so she was with child of the Holy Ghost;[n]—that which was (γεννηθεν) begotten in her was of the Holy Ghost.[o]—The power

g Luke i. 31, 32, 35. h Mat. i. 23. with Isa. vii. 14. i Isa. ix. 6. k Luke ii. 11. l John i. 14. m 1 Tim. iii. 16. n Mat. i. 18. o Ver. 20.

of the Highest overshadowed her. By the *Highest* is meant the Father: for a little above it is said, that Christ should be called the Son of the Highest;[p] and, addressing the Father, he says, "A body hast THOU prepared me."[q]——Lastly, the eternal Word (επιλαμβανεται) took upon him, or took hold of, the human nature thus prepared for him of the seed of Abraham, in such a manner as to make it his own.[r] Thus he took part of the same flesh and blood with the children which God had given him;[s] and the result is, that his person thus constituted is the Son of God.[t] Though the eternal and unchangeable Word did not hereby cease to be what he was before, yet he was *made flesh*, and in this respect is *the only begotten of the Father* in a sense peculiar to himself;[u] for never was a person so begotten or constituted before, nor ever will be, whereby two distinct natures so infinitely distant as the divine and human are united in one individual SELF. From this reason of his sonship given by the angel, it would appear that it lies neither in his divine nor human nature separately considered, but in the union of both in his one person.

He is also the Son of God in respect of his being begotten from the dead, and of the consequent glory and dominion conferred upon him. As in the first creation he was before all things, and the first born, or supreme Lord,* of every creature,

* Christ is styled (πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως) *the First-born of every creature*, Col. i. 15. not because he was the first created of all the

p Luke i. 32. q Heb. x. 5. r Chap. ii. 16. s Ver. 14. t Luke i. 35. u John i. 14.

since by him were all things created as their cause, and for him as their end;[x] so in the new creation he is the Beginning,† the First-born or First-begotten from the dead;[y] and that not only as being the First-begotten of all the children of God, considered as the children of the resurrection,[z] and who are also waiting for this adoption or sonship, to wit, the redemption of their bodies;[a] but also in respect of his sovereignty and dominion as Lord and Heir of all things,[b] being God's First-born,[c] to whom, by right of primogeniture, belongs the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power:[d] "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living."[e] It was when God raised him from the dead, and conferred upon him the kingdom and priesthood, that he said unto him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."[f] It was then

creatures, but the reason given is, *because by him were all things created* ver. 16. therefore it must respect his dominion as Lord over all, which was the right and prerogative of the first-born; and so to give one the dominion is to make him first-born, Psal. lxxxix. 27. although he was not so by birth, Gen. xxvii. 37.

† The titles of Christ which are prefixed to the epistles to the seven churches of Asia in the Revelations, are all taken from chap. i. though the language is sometimes a little varied; so that "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, *the Beginning of the creation of God*," chap. iii. 14. answers to "the faithful Witness, *the First-begotten of the dead*, and the Prince of the kings of the earth," chap. i. 5.

x Col. i. 15, 16, 17. y Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. and iii. 14. z Luke xx. 36. Acts xxvi. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. a Rom. viii. 23. b Heb i. 2. c Psal. lxxxix. 27. Heb. i. 6. d Gen. xlix. 3. e Rom. xiv. 9. f Psal. ii. 7. with Acts xiii. 33. Heb. i. 4, 5. and v. 5.

that the promise made to David concerning him was fully accomplished: "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.[g]" This last view of his sonship supposes the divine dignity of his person, as before set forth, and is founded upon it; for who but the mighty God could sustain such a government upon his shoulder,[h] or manage the key of David,[i] the keys of the invisible world and of death?[k] Who but he was worthy to receive all power in heaven and in earth as the Father's heir, and to be the object of all that divine homage, honour, and worship, both from men and angels, which is connected with it?[l] These are some of the leading senses in which Jesus is declared to be the Christ the Son of God; but I pretend not to have given the whole import of that gospel proposition.

We shall now proceed to consider more particularly what the gospel testifies concerning his WORK as the Saviour of lost sinners.

During his personal ministry upon earth he preached the glad tidings of salvation as the great Prophet of his church;[m] and for this he was commissioned of the Father and inspired by the Holy Spirit,[n] according to the promise, "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him."[o] This Jesus applies to himself when he says, "I do nothing of myself;

g 2 Sam. vii. 14. Psal. lxxxix. 26, 27. with Heb. i. 5. h Isa. ix. 6. i Rev. iii. 7. k Chap. i. 18. l John v. 22, 23. Philip. ii. 9---12. Heb. i. 6. Rev. v. 9---14. m Heb. ii. 3. n Luke iv. 18. o Deut. xviii. 18.

but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things :—The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me :—I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me ; he gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak."[p] "The law," which both condemned the sinner and typified the gospel, "was given by Moses ; but grace," instead of condemnation, "and truth" in place of shadows, "came by Jesus Christ. No man," no not even Moses, "hath," like him, "seen God at any time : the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom," and so privy to the whole counsels and will "of the Father, he," as the true prophet, "hath declared him."[q]

To confirm his mission and doctrine, he, by the same Spirit,[t] performed miracles, wonders, and signs ;[s] such as instantaneously healing all manner of diseases, ejecting demons, controuling the elements, raising the dead, &c. ;[t] by all which he was approved of God the Father as the Messiah his Son. To this proof he refers the Jews : "I have greater witness than that of John ; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me."—"The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me."—"Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father,

p John viii. 28. xii. 49. and xiv. 24. xvii. 6, 8, 26.
q John i. 17, 18. and
r Mat. xii. 28.
s Acts ii. 23.
t Chap. x. 38, 39.

believe me not. But if I do, though you believe not me, believe the works ; that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."[u]

He hath also exhibited in his life a pattern of the most perfect holiness, patience, humility, and self-denied obedience, even unto death, and he hath left his disciples this example for their imitation, that they, having the same spirit of faith, might follow his steps,[y] and walk as he walked.[z]

But the gospel chiefly insists upon what Christ hath done as the *substitute* and *representative* of the guilty ; such as, that " he died for our sins, according to the scriptures;—that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures;"[a] that " he ascended up far above all heavens,"[b] and sat down on the right-hand of the Majesty on high,"[c] where he continues to make intercession for his people.[d] We shall briefly touch at each of these particulars, and show their import.

1. The DEATH of Christ is such an important article of the gospel which the apostles preached, that their whole doctrine is denominated, " preaching Christ crucified[e]—the preaching of the cross of Christ."[f] Paul " determined not to know any thing," either as the foundation of his own hope and glorying, or as the subject of his preaching to others, " save Jesus Christ and him

u John v. 36. and x. 25, 36, 37, 38. y 2 Cor. iv. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 21. Mat. xi. 29. and xvi. 24. John xiii. 15. and xv. 12.
z 1 John ii. 6. a 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. b Eph. iv. 10.
c Heb. i. 3. d Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25. e 1 Cor. i. 23.
f Chap. i. 18.

crucified."[g] And no wonder, if we only consider the import of this fact.

(1.) Christ's death is that *obedience* which stands opposed to the disobedience of the first man.[h] Adam is expressly called the type of him that was to come,[i] he being the public representative of his posterity, even as Christ the second Adam is of those whom the Father hath given him ;[k] and the obedience of Christ is contrasted with the disobedience of Adam in these words : "For as by one man's *disobedience* many were made sinners ; so by the *obedience* of one shall many be made righteous."[l] By obedience here is principally meant his laying down his life, for that is the subject upon which the comparison of Adam with Christ is introduced.[m] Christ's death was a voluntary act of obedience to the commandment of his Father ; so he says "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."[n] The will of God which he came to do, and by which his people are sanctified, was the offering up of his body once.[o] By this act of obedience he at once fulfilled the law to the utmost, exercising the perfection of love to God and man, and satisfying all its penal demands upon

g 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. vi. 14. h Rom. v. 19. i Ver. 14.
k 1 Cor. xv. 45. Heb. ii. 13. l Rom. v. 19. m See the connection of ver. 9, 10, 11, 12.
n John x. 17, 18.
o Heb. x. 9, 10.

his guilty people.[p] The spotless holiness of his heart and life qualified him for this obedience, and the divine dignity of his person gave it infinite worth and efficacy.[q] This is that (ἓν δικαίωμα) *one righteousness*, which is not only an adequate opposite to the (ἑνὶ παραπτώματι) *one offence*,[r] but (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) *much more abundant* in its merits and effects: for it justifies not only from that *one offence*, but also from our own many *offences;* redeems not merely from the death which came by Adam, but also saves from the wrath to come, or the second death, and intitles to a life far more excellent than that which was forfeited, a heavenly life from the dead, such as Jesus now enjoys.[s]

(2.) The gospel exhibits Christ's death as a true and proper *sacrifice* for sin. A sacrifice is a victim substituted in the place of the guilty, slain for their sins, and presented unto God as an atonement for them, with a view to satisfy his justice and procure his favour.[t] Sacrifices have in all ages, and by almost all nations of the world, been looked upon as indispensibly necessary to render the Deity propitious. The heathens, though they had lost the knowledge of the true God, still retained such a sense of this, that some of them sacrificed their own children for that purpose. Whether this universal notion, that the Deity was to be appeased by sacrifice, took its rise from an original revelation, or was suggested by conscious guilt, and a dread of the Divine displeasure, is not perhaps very material to know. It proba-

p Gal. iii. 23. q 1 Pet i. 19. ii. 22. and iii. 18. Heb. ix 14 Acts xx. 28. r Rom. v. 18. s Chap. v. 15, 16, 17, 20, 21
t Lev. i. 3, 4. and iv. 32---35.

bly originated from the former, and was continued under the influence of the latter. Whatever be in this, it served to make the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice easier understood when it came to be preached among the nations. Sacrifices were instituted by Divine appointment immediately after the entrance of sin, to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ; accordingly we find Abel, Noah, Abraham, &c. offering sacrifices in the faith of this. Under the law, the Lord appointed divers kinds of sacrifices for the children of Israel: The paschal lamb;[u]—the holocaust, or whole burnt-offering;[x]—the sin-offering, or sacrifice of expiation;[y]—and the peace-offering, or sacrifice of thanksgiving;[z] all which emblematically set forth the sacrifice of Christ, being the instituted types and shadows of it.[a] Accordingly Christ set them all aside when he offered his sacrifice: "Above when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offerings, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (which are offered by the law:) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."[b]

As in the comparison with Adam, so on this subject the Apostle sets forth the excellency of Christ's sacrifice above those of the law. The legal sacrifices were only brute animals; such as bullocks, heifers,

u Exod. xii. 3. x Lev. vii. 8. y Chap. iv. 3, 4, &c.
z Chap. vii. 11, 12, &c. a Heb. ix. 9---15. and x. 1. 1 Cor. v. 7.
b Heb x. 8, 9, 10.

goats, lambs, &c.;[c] but the sacrifice of Christ was himself,[d] a person of infinite dignity and worth. The former, though they sanctified to the purifying of the flesh from ceremonial uncleanness, yet it was not possible for them to expiate sin, or purge the conscience of the worshipper from the guilt of it, and so it is said that God was not well-pleased in them;[e] but Christ hath effectually and for ever put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, having made an adequate atonement unto God for it,[f] and thereby also purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God.[g] The first were offered year by year continually, which showed their insufficiency, and that God was still calling sins to remembrance:[h] but the last needs not to be repeated, because it hath fully and at once answered all the ends of sacrifice; upon which account God hath declared that he will remember the sins and iniquities of his people no more. "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."[i]

(3.) By the death of Christ the old covenant was set aside, and the new covenant made, dedicated, and confirmed.

The old or first covenant is that which God made with the nation of Israel at Sinai by the mediation of Moses,[k] in pursuance of his promise to Abraham respecting his fleshly seed.[l] This covenant was but

c Heb. ix. 12, 13. d Heb. i. 3. ix. 14, 26. and x. 10. e Chap. x. 4, 5, 8, 11. f Chap. ix. 26. Eph. v. 2. g Heb. ix. 14. and x. 22. h Chap. x. 3. i Heb. vii. 27. and x. 14--19. k See Exod. chap. xix. to xxiv. l Deut. xxix. 12, 13.

a temporal earthly shadow of the new and better covenant which was to be made after those days.

The new or second covenant is that which God made by the mediation of Christ with the true Israel, the spiritual seed of Abraham, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, according to the promise he had made him of blessing all nations in his Seed, which is Christ.[m]

These two covenants* were allegorically repre-

* Many view these two covenants as only different dispensations of one and the same covenant, though the Apostle expressly calls them *two*, Gal. iv. 24. Had they been one covenant, then it behoved the mediator, people, priest, sacrifice, sanctuary, and inheritance, to be the same also, or at least of the same kind; but in all these the scripture makes such a difference as is between flesh and spirit, earth and heaven, shadow and substance, things temporal and things eternal. This mistake leads them also to contrast the new covenant with a covenant supposed to have been made with Adam; whereas the scripture always speaks of it with reference to, and in distinction from, the old covenant made at Sinai, which was its type. The law given to Adam is not held forth under the notion of a covenant, that being applied in scripture to God's entering into a friendly relation with *sinful* men, which could not take place but by shedding the blood of sacrifice: hence the original expression for making a covenant signifies to *cut off a purifying victim*, as explained Jer. xxxiv. 18. and exemplified Gen. xv. 17, 18. Exod. xxxiv. 5, 11. but for this there was no occasion while Adam stood naturally in friendship with his Maker. Yet the law given to Israel, in the Sinai covenant, represented and called to mind, in several respects, the original law given to Adam; and in this view it was the ministration of death and condemnation to sinners, and is opposed to the promise, Gal. iii. 18.---to grace, Rom. xi. 6---to faith, Gal. iii. 12.---to the righteousness of faith, Rom. iv. 13. and x. 5, 6. It was given to that people with a view to make them sensible of their sin and danger, and of their need of salvation by the promised Seed, and so was subservient to the promise. See Rom. v. 20. and vii. 13. Gal. iii 18---25.

m Heb. viii. and ix. 15. and xii. 24. Rom. iii. 29, 30. and ix. 6---9. Gal. iii. 7---19.

sented in Abraham's family; the first by Hagar the bond-woman, the last by Sarah the free-woman; and the people of these covenants were represented by their respective sons Ishmael and Isaac.[n]

The old covenant and the new could not be both in force at the same time, because the former was the type of the latter. They were also incompatible with each other in this respect, that the first included only the nation of Israel, and shut out the Gentiles as aliens and foreigners;[o] whereas the last comprehends believers of all nations, whether Jews or Gentiles.[p] It is evident, therefore, that the new covenant could not take place till the first was made old and ready to vanish away.[q] The Lord had promised of old to make this new covenant;[r] but it was not actually made till Christ by his one offering had set aside the legal sacrifices, and perfected for ever them that are sanctified; for this is what the Apostle gives us as the accomplishment of that promise;[s] so that it was made upon Christ's sacrifice. The first covenant was not dedicated without blood: "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet-wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you."[t] Jesus shows what answers to this in the second, when he says, "This is the new covenant in my blood;"[u]

n Gal. iv. 22, 31. Col. ii. 14.
o Eph. ii. 12.
p Chap. ii. 13---17.
q Heb. viii. 13.
r Jer. xxxi. 31---35.
s Heb. x. 5---19.
t Heb. ix. 18, 19, 20.
u Luke xxii. 20

or, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;"[x] plainly intimating, that the new covenant was made in or by his blood; and hence his blood is called "the blood of sprinkling,"[y] "the blood of the everlasting covenant."[z] It is through Christ's blood that all the promises of the new covenant take effect. By it he redeemed or *purchased* the people of this covenant out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,[a] and sanctified or *consecrated* them unto God, as a royal priesthood, an holy nation, and peculiar people.[b] Thus the covenant relation took place, as expressed in the promise, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."—By this he also made a complete and everlasting *atonement* for their sins,[c] and upon this ground the promise is fulfilled, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more."[d]—It is only in the atonement that the true character of God is manifested as the just God and the Saviour;[e] and hereby all the people of this covenant "know the Lord from the least of them unto the greatest of them."—It is through the application of this blood by the Spirit, that the conscience is purged from dead works to serve the living God;[f] and the faith of it working by love,[g] is the accomplishment of that promise, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." Thus they are "elect according to

x Mat. xxvi. 28. y Heb. xii. 24. z Chap. xiii. 20. a 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Rev. v. 9, 10. b Heb. xiii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 9. c Mat xxvi. 28. Heb. ii. 17. 1 John ii. 2. d Heb. x. 14, 17. e Rom. iii. 25, 26. Isa. xlv. 21. f Heb. x. 14. g Gal. v, 6. and vi. 15.

the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."[a] It was the blood of Christ which *confirmed* the covenant, and *ratified* all the exceeding great and precious promises upon which it is established. It is the ratification of promises that gives them a covenant form: in this respect the new covenant is compared to a testament,* which is of force by the death of the testator, but of no strength at all whilst he liveth.[h] When God made promise to Abraham he confirmed it by an oath; not as if his word had been insufficient, but that it might more abundantly show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, and give them strong consolation.[i] This was the highest confirmation that words could give, for he could swear by none greater than himself. But the new covenant is confirmed in a still more striking and wonderful manner, even by the precious blood of his own Son; which, as it is the meritorious ground of the promises, and the highest demonstration of the Divine love and good-will to men, is suited to remove

* Διαθηκη signifies either a *covenant* or *testament;* but when that word is expressive of the old or new economy, it ought always, in my opinion, to be rendered *covenant*. Even in Heb. ix. 16, 17. it may be so translated, if instead of *testator*, διαθεμενος be understood to signify the *appointed* sacrifice by which covenants were ratified, and επι νεκροις be rendered, not *after men are dead*, but literally, *upon the dead*, viz. sacrifice or animals; for the Apostle is evidently speaking of Christ under the character of *mediator* and *high-priest*, and of the *blood* of his *sacrifice;* which do not properly belong to the idea of a testament or latter-will, but to that of a covenant betwixt God and sinful men.

a 1 Pet. i. 2. h Heb. ix. 16, 17. i Chap. vi. 13---19.

every ground of suspicion from the human heart, and to give the strongest assurance of all stipulated blessings; such as the remission of sins, the adoption of children, and the eternal inheritance:[k] for if "God spared not *his own Son,*" (a person of infinite dignity and worth, and the object of his supreme love,) "but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us *all things*?[l]" and especially when we consider that he was delivered up for this very end. Thus we see how the new covenant was made and ratified in Christ's blood, or upon his sacrifice.

2. Another fact recorded in the gospel is the BURIAL of Christ.[m] It was predicted that he should make his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death,[n] and also typified by Jonah in the whale's belly.[o] It is an article of the gospel which the apostles preached unto the nations. Paul preaching at Antioch, says, "When they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre;"[p] and he mentions it among the other particulars which he delivered to the Corinthians first of all.[q] The burial of Christ was,

(1.) A strong evidence of the reality of his death. His enemies indeed had made sure work of him by piercing his side with a spear, after they saw that he was dead already;[r] but his being wrapped up in

k Rom. viii. 33, 34. Gal. iv. 4, 5. Heb. ix. 15. l Rom. viii. 32.
m Mat. xxvii. 57---61. Mark xv. 43---47. Luke xxiii. 50---54. John xix. 38---42. n Isa. liii. 9. o Mat. xii. 40. p Acts xiii. 29.
q 1 Cor. xv. 4. r John xix. 33, 34.

linen clothes, with his mouth and nostrils filled with spices, as the manner of the Jews was to bury,[s] and in this situation lying three incomplete days in a cold sepulchre, is a further demonstration to all the world that he was really dead, and that there was no latent principle of life remaining in him.

(2.) It affords a strong proof of his resurrection; for the precautions taken by his enemies to secure the sepulchre, by sealing the stone and setting a watch, cut off every possibility of deceit in that matter.[t]

(3.) It was the last and lowest step of his humiliation. The last part of the curse denounced against Adam was, that he should return unto the ground from whence he was taken;[u] and so the grave is the house appointed for all living.[x] To redeem from this curse, the Prince of life submitted to be brought into the dust of death,[y] and to be retained for a while in the gloomy mansions of the dead. "Death and the grave (as one beautifully observes) might be proud of such a tenant as this." But he stoops thus low that his victory over both might be the more conspicuous and complete; for hereby he became the plagues of death, despoiling it of its sting and power, and the destruction of the grave, by bursting asunder its gates, and opening a passage through it to everlasting life.[z]

3. The RESURRECTION of Christ from the dead is another article of the gospel.[a] This fact holds such an important place in the gospel system, that

s John xix. 40. t Mat. xxvii. 62---66. u Gen. iii. 19. x Job xxx. 23. y Psal. xxii. 15. z Hos. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. a Acts ii. 21, 32. x. 40, 41. and xiii. 30, 31.

the truth of the whole stands or falls with it.[b] The chief end of the apostolic office was to bear witness to it;[c] salvation is connected with the belief of it,[d] and by it believers are begotten again to the lively hope of the heavenly inheritance.[e]

(1.) By his resurrection he was *determined to be the Son of God* with power,[f] according to what was foretold of him in ancient prophecy.[g] Jesus himself refers his enemies to his resurrection as the decisive proof of his character and mission;[h] and so gave them the fairest opportunity to satisfy themselves as to the truth of that fact, and to guard against every imposition.[i] Had his body remained in the grave, all his pretensions would have been refuted; but his resurrection from the dead on the appointed day, justified all his claims, and demonstrated that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour and Judge of the world,[k] who had thus received power from his Father, not only to lay down his life, but to take it again.[l]

(2.) His resurrection proves the *perfection of the atonement* which he made by his death for the sins of his people, and that God is fully and for ever well-pleased in it. Had he continued under the power of that death which he suffered for our sins, we could have no evidence that he had made full satisfaction: On the contrary, his remaining in the prison of the grave would have shown him unable to pay our debt

b 1 Cor. xv. 14---19. c Acts i. 22. iv. 33. and x. 40, 41. d Rom. x. 9. e 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. f Rom. i. 4. g Psal. xvi. 10. with Acts ii. 24---29. Psal. ii. 7. with Acts xiii. 33. h Mat. xii. 38---40. John ii. 18---22. i Mat. xxvii. 62---66. k Acts xvii. 31. l John x. 18.

and obtain remission. "If Christ be not raised," (says the Apostle,) "your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."[m] But in his resurrection we see him obtaining a full discharge in the name of all for whom he died, and justice acquitting him from all further demands; for the God of peace, in bringing him again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant which was shed for the remission of sins,[n] raised him again for our justification,[o] and removed the curse. Thus he was justified by the Spirit[p] quickening him from death, the wages of our sins;[q] so that none can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, seeing "it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."[r]

(3.) It is the *evidence, earnest,* and *example* of the resurrection of the saints at the last day. The connection which believers have with Christ in his resurrection is compared to that which they have with Adam in the death which came by his sin: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."[s] Christ in his resurrection is compared to the *first fruits* under the law, which being offered to the Lord, consecrated the whole harvest, and was a sample as well as certain pledge and earnest of it:[t] "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept—Christ the first-fruits, afterwards

m 1 Cor. xv. 17. n Heb. xiii. 20. o Rom. iv. 25
p 1 Tim. iii. 16. q 1 Pet. iii. 18. r Rom. viii. 33, 34.
s 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. t Lev. xix. 24. Deut. xxvi. 2.

they that are Christ's at his coming."[u] He is also in this respect called the *First-born*, the *First-begotten* from the dead;[x] which imports his connection with many brethren who shall in their order succeed him in that birth, and be the children of God by being the children of the resurrection.[y] This is that adoption or sonship which the Spirit leads them to wait for, to wit, the redemption of their bodies.[z] Christ was raised from the dead as the vital *head* of his body, the church, and the Spirit which quickened him is communicated to all his members;[a] so that those who partake of the Spirit of the risen Jesus, and are thereby quickened from death in trespasses and sins to a new life of conformity to him in this world,[b] have the very quickening principle already dwelling in them which raised Christ, and which shall also raise up their mortal bodies at last: for, says the Apostle, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."[c] In short, such is the connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of his people, that to deny the latter amounts to a denial of the former: "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen."[d] Thus we see

u 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. x Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. y Luke xx. 36, 38. z Rom. viii. 23. a Chap. viii. 9. b Chap. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12, 13. and iii. 1. c Rom. viii. 11. d 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13.

that they stand or fall together, so that we cannot be more certain of Christ's resurrection from the dead that we are of the resurrection of those that sleep in him.[e] With regard to the nature of the resurrection body, we are assured that Christ's risen and glorified body is the original and pattern of it. As in this life the saints bear the image of Adam in their earthly mortal bodies, they shall then bear the image of Christ in having their vile bodies changed and fashioned like unto his glorious body.[f] The body, as derived from Adam, is sown not only into the grave, but also into this world, (ψυχικον) an animal, corruptible, dishonourable, and weak body; but in the resurrection it shall be raised, like Christ's, a spiritual, incorruptible, glorious, and powerful body.[g]—Thus they shall not only see him as he is, but be like him.[h]

4. Another article of the gospel-testimony is Christ's ASCENSION into heaven and GLORIFICATION at the Father's right hand.[i] Of this fact the apostles were witnesses.[k] They could not indeed with their bodily eyes see him enter into the highest heavens (though some of them had afterwards visions of him in his glorified state;[l]) but this was fully proved by his pouring down the Spirit according to his promise,[m] which could not take place till he was glorified.[n] This was such an evidence as fell under the examination of men's senses; for (says

e 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. f 1 Cor. xv. 45---50. Phil. iii. 21.
g 1 Cor. xv. 42---46. h 1 John iii. 2. i Mark xvi. 19.
k Acts i. 10. l Acts vii. 56. 1 Cor. xv. 8. Rev. i. 13---16.
m John xvi. 7. n John vii. 39.

the Apostle) "he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."[o]

(1.) His ascension into heaven imports his *victory* over all his and our enemies. Having in his own person overcome the world,[p] expiated sin,[q] spoiled principalities and powers,[r] and abolished death,[s] he ascended on high amidst thousands of attending angels, making an open show of his enemies, and leading captivity captive,[t] like a mighty conqueror returning from battle, and gracing his triumph with spoils of war and captives in chains. Well might the gates of the celestial temple be addressed on this triumphant occasion: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."[u]

(2.) He ascended that he might *bestow the Spirit* upon his church. While he was on earth the Holy Spirit was not yet given in that manner and degree that was suited to his New Testament kingdom, "because he was not yet glorified:"[x] And so he tells his apostles, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."[y] This promise began to be accomplished when, "being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise

o Acts ii. 33. p John xvi. 33. q Heb. ix. 26. r Col. 2. 15. s 2 Tim. i. 10. t Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. Eph. iv. 8. u Psal. xxiv. 7, 8. x John vii. 38, 39. y Chap. xvi. 7.

of the Spirit," he shed him forth upon his disciples.[z] Thus "he ascended on high, and gave gifts unto men,"[a] like a victorious prince, who, upon his triumphant entry into his capital, scatters liberal donations among the people. As head of influence to his body, he gave to some the extraordinary gifts of apostles, prophets, and evangelists; to others, the ordinary gifts of pastors and teachers; and all for the purpose of (καταρτισμον) bringing into joint the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of his body the church.[b] This Spirit, which acts as the Spirit of the truth, and the animating soul of the whole body he communicates also to every individual member; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."[c] Hereby they are enlightened,[d] regenerated,[e] sanctified,[f] and comforted;[g] have the knowledge of their adoption,[h] the earnest of the inheritance,[i] and are sealed unto the day of redemption.[k]

(3.) He ascended to *take possession of his throne and kingdom*. This kingdom was promised under the Old Testament,[l] typified by the Jewish theocracy,[m] and proclaimed at hand in the days of his flesh; but he did not actually take possession of it till he ascended far above all heavens, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. It was then that God his God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows;[n] crowned

z Acts ii. 33. a Eph. iv. 8. b Chap. iv. 11, 12.
c Rom. viii. 9. d Eph. i. 17, 18. e John iii. 5.
f 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Pet. i. 2. g Rom. v. 5. h Chap. viii. 15, 16.
Gal. iv. 6. i Eph. i. 14. k Chap. iv. 30. l Psal. cxxxii. 11.
Isa. ix. 6, 7. Dan. vii. 14. m Luke i. 32, 33. n Mat. iii. 2. Luke x. 9.

him with glory and honour ;[p] set him as king upon his holy hill of Zion,[q] saying unto him, "Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool ;"[r] and commanded all the angelic hosts to worship him.[s] It was in consequence, and as the reward of his voluntary humiliation and obedience unto death, that God thus highly exalted him, and vested him with supreme dominion over all things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth,[t] and also bestowed upon him the highest joy and blessedness. Hence we find his royal enthronement and happiness connected : "Thou preventest him with the blessing of goodness ; thou settest a crown of pure gold upon his head. He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in thy salvation : honour and majesty hast thou set upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever : thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance."[u] This is that joy which was set before him, and for which he endured the cross, despising the shame.[x]

(4.) He ascended to *officiate as high-priest* in the heavenly sanctuary. We are expressly told that "if he were on earth, he should not be a priest," *i. e.* he could not on earth complete the service answerable to his appointment as high-priest; and the reason is given, "seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law, who serve unto the

o Heb. i. 8, 9. p Heb. ii. 9. q Psal. ii. 6. r Psal. cx. 1. Acts ii. 34, 35. s Psal. xcvii. 7. Heb. i. 6. t Phil. ii. 9—12. u Psal. xxi. 3, 4, 5, 6. x Heb. xii. 2.

example and shadow* of heavenly things."[y] The law appointed no earthly priesthood but one, which was restricted entirely to the tribe of Levi and order of Aaron ;[z] but Christ having sprung of the tribe of Judah, had no appointment to the service of the earthly sanctuary,[a] and so could not be an high-priest on earth. He indeed suffered on earth as a sacrifice for sin; but the mere slaying of the sacrifice did not complete the atonement even under the law. In order to this, it was necessary that its blood should be brought within the vail into the holiest of all, and there sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, after having offered the insense ;[b] and this was a service peculiar to the high-priest. Jesus could not thus officiate on earth, there being no holy place appointed for him there in which he might offer his gift and sacrifice. He was constituted a high-priest by the word of the oath which was since the law,[c] when the Lord sware unto him, " Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec :"[d] but this oath does not make him a priest on earth, but in heaven; for it connects with these words, " Sit thou at my right-hand, until I

* "The (ὑποδειγμα) exemplar and shadow of the heavenlies," is the tabernacle and all that pertained to it, where the high-priest performed the service, and which is afterwards called the ὑποδειγματα, *patterns* or exemplars of things in the heavens, chap. ix. 20, 23. ; the *holy places* made with hands, the *figures* of the true, ver. 24. For it was concerning the tabernacle and its utensils that the Lord said to Moses, " See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount," Exod. xxv. 40. with Acts vii. 44. Heb. viii. 5.

y Heb. viii. 4, 5. z Exod. xl. 15. a Heb. vii. 14.
b Lev. xvi. c Heb. vii. 28. d Psal. cx. 4.

make thine enemies thy footstool;"[e] which did not take place till having risen from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right-hand of God.[f] And so the Apostle sums up his explication of that oath thus: "We have such an high-priest who is set on the right-hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man."[g] His ascension into heaven therefore, corresponds with the entry of the high-priest into the most holy place on the great day of atonement; and this the Apostle expressly declares: "But Christ being come, an high-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us:—For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."[h] In this exalted state, the oath declares him a priest *for ever;* not subject to mortality, as in the days of his flesh, nor dying out of his office like the mortal sons of Aaron, but made a priest after the power of an endless life; and as he ever liveth to make intercession, he is able to save them to the uttermost that approach unto God by him.[i]

(5.) Lastly, He ascended into heaven as the

e Psal. cx. 1. f Acts ii. 34, 35. g Heb. viii. 1, 2.
h Chap. ix. 11, 12, 24. i Heb. vii. 21---26.

*forerunner* of his brethren.[k] Agreeably to this he says to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also."[l] This hope he gives to all his followers: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be."[m] For this he prays to his Father: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me."[n] As soon as they are absent from the body they shall be present with the Lord;[o] and when their bodies shall be ransomed from the grave, they shall in their complete persons be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so they shall be ever with the Lord.[p]

5. Christ's second coming to RAISE THE DEAD and JUDGE THE WORLD at the last day, is another most important branch of the gospel revelation, and is ranked among the foundation principles of it.[q] Indeed the whole mediatorial economy refers to this, and without it the justice of the Divine administration could not fully appear, for there is no proper retribution in this life. As there cannot be a general judgment without a resurrection of the dead, so the power of both is vested in Jesus. "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;" and "as the Father

k Heb. vi. 20.
l John xiv. 2, 3.
m Chap. xii. 26.
n Chap. xvii. 24.
o 2 Cor. v. 8.
p 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17,
q Heb. vi. 2.

raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."[r] With this stands connected his power to judge the world: "For the Father judgeth no man," *i. e.* immediately by himself; "but hath committed all judgment to the Son—and hath given him authority to execute judgment also," *i. e.* to dispense rewards and punishments, "because he is the Son of man."*[s] Therefore he commanded his apostles "to preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he who was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead."[t] Accordingly they declared, that God now "commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."[u] On that appointed day, "the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory. Before him shall be gathered all nations;"[x] "for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ."[y] The quick who are alive and remain at his coming,[z] and the dead

* Not merely because he is a man, for that is no proper reason; but because he is that very person spoken of in Dan. vii. 13, 14. under the designation of *the Son of man*, who was to come with the clouds of heaven, and to whom the dominion, glory, and kingdom is given, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. See Mat. xxvi. 64. Rev. i. 7.

r John v. 21, 26. s Ver. 22, 27. t Acts x. 42.
u Acts xvii. 30, 31. x Mat. xxv. 32. y 2 Cor. v. 10.
z 1 Thess. iv. 17.

small and great of all generations,[a] even all that are in their graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.[b] Then will he judge the world in righteousness,[c] *i. e.* by the most just and equitable rule of procedure; not reaping where he hath not sowed, nor gathering where he hath not strawed,[d] but according to the advantages and talents bestowed upon every one respectively, so will he demand an account in the judgment.[e] The heathens will be judged by the natural law written in their conscience, whereby they knew the judgment of God;[f] the Jews by the law of Moses;[g] and those who enjoy the light of the gospel will be judged according to their superior privileges; "for to whom much is given, of him shall be much required."[h] During the accepted time and day of salvation, enemies are reconciled, and ungodly sinners pardoned and received into favour, through faith in Christ's blood, without works;[i] but then he will judge every man according to his works.[k] To display distributive justice in rewards and punishments, it seems necessary that a foundation for both should appear in the characters of those who are judged. And though none can be acquitted in the judgment by that law which requires perfect personal obedience as the condition of life,[l] and denounceth a curse upon every failure;[m] yet Christ,

a Rev. xx. 12. b John v. 28, 29. c Acts xvii. 31.
d Mat. xxv. 24, 26. e Ver. 14---31. f Rom. i. 32. and ii. 12, 15. g Chap. ii. 12. John v. 45. h Luke xii. 48.
i Rom. iii. 28. and v. 10. k Mat. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Pet. i. 17. Rev. ii. 23. and xx. 12.
l Rom. iii. 20. and x. 5. m Gal. iii. 10.

having redeemed his people from the law in this respect,[n] and given it to them as a law of love and liberty suited to the new constitution of grace established in his blood, he will judge them by this law according to their work of faith and labour of love to his name,[o] and approve of them as good and faithful servants who have well done.[p] Lastly, He will pass the final and irrevokable sentence upon men according to their works; and then shall the wicked go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.[q]

This doctrine contains the strongest motives not only to induce all men every where to repent,[r] but also to stimulate believers to "labour, that, whether present or absent, they may be accepted of him;"[s] and "seeing they look for such things, to be diligent, that they may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless;"[t] that they "may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."[u]

The judgment of the world is the finishing work of Christ's mediatorial reign; for "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.—And when all things shall be subdued

n Rom. vii. 4. Gal. iii. 13. Heb. vi. 10. Rev. xx. 12---15. o James i. 25. Mat. xxv. 35---41. p Mat. xxv. 21, 23. q Chap. xxv. 34, 41, 46. r Acts xvii. 30. s 2 Cor. v. 9. t 2 Pet. iii. 14. u 1 John ii 28.

unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."[x]

Thus we have considered the gospel *testimony* with its import; which is all summed up in this, That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that he was delivered for the offences, and raised again for the justification of sinners.[y]

II. THE gospel also contains a PROMISE, That whosoever believeth this testimony shall be saved.

This promise is an essential branch of the gospel, and so we find it included in the commission to preach it: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."[z] I shall just add a few other passages to the same purpose. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life."[a] "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."[b] "To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins."[c] "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."[d]

x 1 Cor. xv. 24---29. y John xx. 31. Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 1---5. z Mark xvi. 16. a John iii. 36. b Chap. vi. 40, 47. c Acts x. 43. d Chap. xiii. 38, 39.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."[e] "But what saith it?" (viz. the gospel declaration of the righteousness which is of faith,) "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shal be saved: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation; for the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."[f]

These and such like passages clearly show, that the same faithful God who testifieth that Jesus is the Christ his beloved Son, *promiseth* with equal certainty, that whosoever believeth this shall be saved; for "this is the promise that he hath promised us (viz. who believe,) even eternal life."[g] If men believe not this promise, they can have no true faith in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God. The revelation of his Godhead is to show him mighty to save. He is called *Jesus*, because he saves his people from their sins;[h]—the *Christ*, because he is anointed to and invested with all saving offices. To believe that he is the Christ, is to believe not only that he is *able* to save (which is a truth though he should never save any;) but also, that whosoever believeth on him shall *certainly be saved* by him. Salvation is the end of his incarnation, death, and resurrection from the dead.[i] The design of declaring him the Christ the Son of

e Acts xvi. 31. f Rom. x. 8---12. g 1 John ii. 25.
h Mat. i. 21. i Heb. ii. 14---18. Rom. iv. 25.

God is, that men might believe it; and why believe it; "that believing they might have life through his name."[k] Without this, their believing could answer no end. "We have believed in Jesus" (says the Apostle) "that we might be justified by the faith of him."[l] Our Lord declares the gospel thus: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,"—for what end?—"that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life."[m] Without this, where would be the love? or how could the gift of his Son be such an amazing expression of it? In short, salvation is both the import and end of all that the gospel testifies concerning the person, mission, and work of Christ; and therefore there is no believing the gospel *testimony* without admitting the *promise*, that whosoever believeth it shall be saved: for God hath declared the one as well as the other; nay, hath declared the latter as the end and import of the former.

The salvation held forth in this promise is a deliverance from the guilt, power, and consequences of sin; and consists in the free remission of sins and acceptance into favour,[n] the adoption of sons,[o] the sanctification of the Spirit, victory over death,[p] and eternal life with Jesus Christ in the heavenly state.[q]

The gospel *testimony* and *promise* cannot be separated without destroying both. Take away the *testimony*, and you remove the foundation of the pro-

k John xx. 31. l Gal. ii. 16. m John iii. 15. n Eph. i. 6, 7. o Gal. iv. 5. p 1 Pet. i. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 57. q 1 John ii. 25.

mise; for if Jesus is not the Christ the Son of God, who hath finished the work of redemption, there can be no salvation to the believer in him. Take away the *promise*, and the testimony will be no longer glad tidings; for unless he that believeth shall be saved, it is of little consequence to the guilty whether Jesus be the Christ or not.

## OF FAITH.

MUCH has been said and written on the nature of that faith to which the promise of salvation is made, and various have been the definitions given of it, many of which have served no other end than to perplex the subject.

Every body knows that faith or belief, in the ordinary sense of the word, is that CREDIT which we give to the truth of any thing which is made known to us by report or testimony, and is grounded either on the veracity of the speaker, or on the evidence by which his words are confirmed.

But many are of opinion, that justifying faith must be something more than this.* They do not think

* Some profess to admit, that "faith is *credence* and *nothing* else," yet at the same time affirm, that "there are some truths which cannot be known or believed without a corresponding temper of heart." By a *corresponding temper of heart* cannot be meant some good disposition *previous* to faith; for as the question relates to faith itself, that would be foreign to the point; and it is certain that true faith does not exist *previous* to the knowledge of the truth, for it cometh by hearing the word of God, Rom. x. 17. Nor can it be meant that this temper of heart is the immediate and inseparable

that *mere belief*, be its object what it may, contains in it any real virtue or moral excellence, that may rationally account for a sinner's being justified, and therefore include in its very nature the exercise of

*effect* of faith; for that is freely granted, and it is not the *effect*, but *nature* or *essence* of faith that is the point in question. The meaning therefore must be this, that faith in its *very nature* is a temper or disposition of heart corresponding to the truth believed; which is to maintain that it is *something else* than *credence*, and so to retract what was before granted.

That this is the sense is clear, for it is argued in support of it, that "if faith was a mere exercise of the understanding, it would contain no virtue, and if faith contained no virtue, unbelief could contain no sin." By *a mere exercise of the understanding* must be meant a *believing* exercise of it, otherwise it is not to the point. To affirm that this "contains no virtue" when it has God or his word for its object, is rather too bold, considering how highly the scripture speaks of it, representing it as the root or principle of all Christian virtues, Gal. v. 6. 1 Tim. i. 5. as that which gives glory to God, Rom. iv. 20. and without which it is impossible to please him, Heb. xi. 6. Surely it is *right* to believe all that God says.

But though we should grant the unfounded assertion, that mere belief contains no virtue, it would not follow that "unbelief could contain no sin:" for such an argument proceeds upon this principle, That if there is no virtue in a thing, there can be no sin in its opposite; but this does not hold true in innumerable instances. There is no positive virtue in abstaining from many crimes that might be mentioned; yet the commission of them, or even the neglect of the opposite duties would be very sinful. There is no moral virtue in taking food when hungry; but wilfully to starve one's self to death would be suicide: And to come nearer the point, there is no moral virtue in believing the testimony of a friend, when I have every reason to do so; yet, in these circumstances, were I to discredit his word, he would feel the injury very sensibly. Now, supposing there was no more virtue contained in believing the witness of God than in believing the witness of men, to which it is compared, it does not follow that there would be no sin in unbelief, which is to make God a liar, 1 John v. 10. To deny that faith is the exercise

love and other holy dispositions of heart. Yet they would not be understood to mean that sinners are justified by the exercise of holy dispositions, or (as they speak) by faith considered *as a work*. A caution which intimates an apprehension that

of a virtuous temper of heart, is to refuse some praise to the creature; but to deny that unbelief is a sin, is to impeach the moral character of God.

But why so solicitous to find virtue or moral excellence in faith? Is it with a view to account for the efficacy ascribed to it in justification? This design is disavowed, for we are told, "That though faith be a moral excellency, yet it is not on account of that excellency that justification is ascribed to it; for if we were justified by faith *as a virtue*, we might as well be justified by love, &c. either would be justification by *our own righteousness*." The question then returns, Of what use is it to contend for the moral excellence of faith in point of justification? The answer given to this is, "That if faith includes the acquiescence of the heart," i. e. of the will and affections, "and so be a *moral excellency*, then there is a *fitness* in God's justifying those persons who thus acquiesce." But as this *fitness* in God's justifying is placed upon faith's being a *moral excellency*, it must be such a *fitness* as is between virtue and its reward, and so this is only a round-about way of saying, that we are justified by faith *as a virtue*, which is above acknowledged to be justification by *our own righteousness*.

It is argued, that "hope implies desire, and desire includes love," and that "*believing* the loveliness of an object and *loving* it are the same." If so, then to be justified by faith is the same as to be justified by hope and love, which is also admitted to be justification by our own righteousness. To avoid this obvious conclusion, it is alleged that "though hope and love be moral excellencies as well as faith, yet none of them have that *relation* to Christ which faith has." But if faith, hope, and love be all one, or included in each other, as is alleged, then they must all have the *same relation* to Christ, consequently the *same place* in justification. Indeed it is simply impossible to point out any *distinction in the relation* which faith, hope, and love have to Christ, without admitting that they are *distinct in themselves*, which is to give up the argument.

their idea of faith is very liable to such a misconstruction; and indeed if faith be a *work* at all, it is not easy to conceive how sinners are justified by faith *without works*. The apostle Paul, however, never gave any such caution, because he did not look upon faith as a work, but, on the contrary, opposeth it, both in its own nature and in point of justification, to all works of every kind, and makes it to correspond with pure grace.[a]

The word πιστις, *faith* or *belief*, is evidently used by the inspired writers in the same sense in which it is commonly used and understood among men in ordinary cases. They never gave the least hint that they had any uncommon idea annexed to that term, nor did they give any directions *how* to believe, or act faith, though they insist much upon *what* men are to believe, and upon the divine *evidence* of its truth. It is also remarkable, that we do not find any of the first converts enquiring what faith is, or in what manner they were to believe. Hence we may reasonably infer, that the apostles used the word faith in its ordinary sense, which required no explanation, and that their hearers did in fact so understand them.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews defines faith in this manner, "Now faith is the (ὑποστασις) CONFIDENCE* of things hoped for, the (ελεγχος)

* Though the word *substance* comes nearer the etymology of ὑποστασις, yet its use in scripture ought chiefly to be consulted. The Seventy frequently use it to express *confidence*, or *confidence of ex-*

a Rom. iii. 28. Chap. iv. 5, 16. Eph. ii. 8, 9.

CONVICTION* of things not seen." Chap. xi. 1. Faith is here expressed by the two words *confidence* and *conviction*, and its objects are *things hoped for*, *things not seen*. Things hoped for must be future good things revealed and promised; and *confidence* in relation to such things must be a *confidence of persuasion*, founded on God's faithfulness and power, that what he hath promised he will undoubtedly perform; for it is explained thus,—a being *persuaded* of the promises[b]—a *judging him faithful* who hath promised[c]—a being *fully persuaded*, that what God hath promised he is able also to perform.[d] This confidence of faith in divine promises is inseparable from *hope*; for it is the confidence of things hoped for, and so is said to be a *believing in hope*,[e] viz. of obtaining the good things promised. Again, faith is here defined more generally, the *conviction of things not seen*. Things not seen include not only things promised but

*pectation*, Ruth i. 12. Psal. xxxix. 7. Ezek. xix. 5. It occurs five times in the New Testament, in three of which it is translated *confidence*, viz. 2 Cor. ix. 4. chap. xi. 17. Heb. iii. 14. and even in this place the translators have so rendered it in the margin.

* The substantive ελεγχος, translated *evidence*, occurs only in one other place in the New Testament, viz. 2 Tim. iii. 26. where it is translated *reproof*, but without any necessity. Many render it *conviction* both there and in this place, and this best agrees with the sense of the verb ελεγχω, which is generally translated *convince*, as in John viii. 9. Acts xviii. 28. 1 Cor. xiv. 24. Tit. i. 9. James ii. 9. Jude verse 15. as it should also be in John xvi. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Though ελεγχος sometimes signifies the *evidence*, *proof*, or *demonstration* which produceth conviction, yet when expressive of faith it must necessarily mean *conviction* itself, which is the effect of evidence upon the mind.

b Heb. xi. 13. c Ver. 11. d Rom. iv. 21. e Ver. 18.

things testified;[f] not only good things to be hoped for, but evil things to be dreaded;[g] not merely things future, but things past and present:[h] All of them, however, so far as they are the objects of faith, must be *things not seen;* for faith is opposed to sight,[i] it being a conviction of the truth and reality of things made known by revelation, and is grounded on the authority of that revelation, considered as the word of God.[k] To illustrate and confirm this simple notion of faith a little farther, we may observe,

1. That the gospel is held forth as a (μαρτυρια) *witness, record,* or *testimony* concerning this great truth, That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that God hath given eternal life in him to all who believe:[l] Those who were sent to testify the gospel of the grace of God are termed *witnesses:* John Baptist "came for a witness to bear witness of the Light:"[m] The apostles were "chosen witnesses" to testify this truth unto the world:[n] Not only so, but the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit are represented as three concurring witnesses to the same important truth;[o] and hence it is termed the *witness* or *testimony of God.*[p]

2. The immediate design of all testimony or witness-bearing is to *produce a belief* of the truth of what is testified. This is the declared design of testifying the gospel. John "came to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might be-

f John iii. 33. 2 Thess. i. 10. g Heb. xi. 7. h Ver. 3, 6.
i 2 Cor. v. 7. k 1 Thess. ii. 13. l 1 John v. 5---13 m John i. 7.
n John xv. 27. Acts x. 39, 41. o 1 John v. 7. pVer. 9. 1 Cor. ii. 1.
q John i. 7.

lieve."[q]—"He that saw it bear record—that ye might believe."[r] This is also the design of the miraculous works by which the gospel testimony was confirmed:—"Say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not: But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him."[s]—"The same works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me."[t]—"These *signs* are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God."[u] Agreeably to these observations,

3. Faith is described to be a belief corresponding to that which is spoken, testified or preached. Abraham, whose faith is set before us as an example, "believed according to that which was spoken."[x] Such also was the faith of the Thessalonians, "our testimony among you was believed;"[y] and of the Corinthians, "so we preached, and so ye believed."[z] We all know what it is to receive or believe the witness of men in the most important affairs of human life, and by this the apostle John gives us an idea of that faith which the gospel requires, without making any difference whatever in the nature of believing, but only substituting the testimony of God in place of men's; "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."[a] We receive

r John xix. 35. s Chap. x. 36, 37, 38. t Chap. v. 36.
u Chap. xx. 31. x Rom. iv. 18. y 2 Thess. i. 10.
z 1 Cor. xv. 11 a 1 John v. 9.

men's testimony by believing that they are true in what they declare; so "He that RECEIVETH his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true."[b] In the former case we believe *men*, in the latter, GOD; but this difference respects only the object, the nature of belief being the same in both cases. The witness of God is *greater* than that of men; but this does not alter the nature of belief, but only increaseth the degree of it, by giving us greater assurance; for men are fallible, and may be deceived themselves, or wish to deceive us; but neither of these is possible with God, to whom omniscience and faithfulness are absolutely essential. That by RECEIVING the witness of God, the apostle means nothing more than simply *believing* it, is clear, for he expresseth its opposite thus, "He that BELIEVETH NOT God hath made him a liar, because he BELIEVETH NOT the record that God gave of his Son."[c] From the whole, therefore, it is evident that faith is neither more nor less than *belief*, and that saving faith is a *belief of the gospel*, or of God's testimony concerning his Son.

This knowledge and belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, though a duty incumbent on all who hear the gospel, is nevertheless the special gift of God,[d] being the effect of divine teaching by means of the word,[e] and peculiar to the elect:[f] So that whatever appearances there may be of it in false professors, they have not at bottom the same perception of the truth, nor that persuasion of it upon its proper evidence which

b John iii. 33. c 1 John v. 10 d Eph. ii. 8. Philip. i. 29. John vi. 45 Rom. x. 17. f 1 John v. 1.

real believers have. But as we cannot discern the difference by the confession of the mouth, when that confession accords with the form of sound words, it is therefore necessary that true faith should be distinguished by its genuine effects upon the heart and life.

As to its effects upon the heart such is the important, interesting and salutary nature of the saving truth testified in the gospel, with its suitableness and freeness for the chief of sinners, that it is no sooner *perceived* and *believed* than it takes possession of the will and affections, and becomes in the soul the ground of its hope, trust, and reliance; the object of its desire, acceptance, esteem and joy; and the principle of every holy, active and gracious disposition of heart.

But these *effects* of faith, or, which is the same, of the truth believed, ought not to be confounded with *faith itself*, as is commonly done. Though faith is the confidence of *things hoped for*, and also worketh *love;* yet it is neither hope nor love, for the Apostle distinguisheth it from both,* "And now

* Some affirm, that "faith, hope and love are three considered only in respect of their *objects;* the object of faith being *revealed truth* ---of hope, *future good*---and of love, the *holy amiableness* of God, and of whatever bears his image." But the Apostle is not speaking of the *objects* of faith, hope, and love, but of *themselves;* and if they are not three as distinguished from each other, their objects can never make them three. The Apostle says, "the greatest of these is love;" but love is not greater than faith and hope in respect of its *object* but in its *own nature*, which shows that faith, hope and love are different from each other, and properly termed *three*. Mr. Saudeman accurately distinguishes them thus: "The gospel presents a *faithful* testimony to be believed, exhibiting an *amiable* object to be loved, and *good things to come* to be hoped for; *faith* then respects the truth of the testimony, *love* what is amiable in it, and *hope* the good things in prospect."

abideth faith, hope, love, these THREE."[g] The same may be said of all its other effects upon the heart; for whatever is more than belief is more than faith, and ought to go by another name.

It will perhaps be asked, Why so nice in distinguishing here? What harm can arise from including in the nature of faith such holy dispositions, affections and exercises of heart as are confessedly inseparable from it? In answer to this let it be considered,

1. That unless we carefully distinguish faith from its effects, particularly on the point of a sinner's acceptance with God, the important doctrine of free justification by faith alone will be materially affected. The scriptures pointedly declare, That God justifies sinners "FREELY BY HIS GRACE, through the REDEMPTION that is in Jesus Christ,"[h] and that this justification is received "through faith in Christ's blood."[i] Faith in this case is always distinguished from, and opposed to the works of the law;[k] not merely of the ceremonial law which was peculiar to the Jews; but of that law by which is the knowledge of sin,[l] which says, "Thou shalt not covet,"[m] and which requires not only outward *good actions*, but *love* and every good disposition of heart both towards God and our neighbour;[n] so that the *works* of this law respect the heart as well as life. The distinction therefore between *faith* and *works*, on this subject, is not that which is between *inward* and *outward* conformity to the law; for if faith is

g 1 Cor. xiii. 13. h Rom. iii. 24. i Ver. 25. k Rom. iii. 20, 27, 28. Chap. ix. 32. Gal ii. 16. Chap. iii. 9---15. l Rom. iii. 20. m Chap. vii. 7. n Mat. xxii. 37---41.

not in this case distinguished from, and opposed to our conformity to the law both outwardly and inwardly, it cannot be said that we are "justified by faith without the deeds of the law,"[o] or that God "justifieth the *ungodly*."[p] Faith indeed, as a principle of action, "worketh by love;" but it is not as thus working that it is imputed for righteousness; for it is expressly declared, that righteousness is imputed "to him that WORKETH NOT, but BELIEVETH on him that justifieth the UNGODLY."[q]— "It is of FAITH that it might be by GRACE,"[r] and grace and works are represented as incompatible with each other;[s] for "to him that WORKETH is the reward not reckoned of GRACE but of DEBT."[t] Now, when men include in the very nature of justifying faith such good dispositions, holy affections and pious exercises of heart as the moral law requires, and so make them necessary (no matter under what consideration) to a sinner's acceptance with God, it perverts the Apostle's doctrine upon this important subject, and makes justification to be at least "as it were by the works of the law."

2. The effect of such doctrine upon the mind of an awakened sinner is obvious. He who conceives that, in order to his pardon and acceptance with God, he must first be possessed of such good dispositions and holy affections as are commonly included in the nature of faith, will find no immediate relief from the gospel, nor any thing in it which fully reaches his case, while he views himself merely as a guilty

o Rom. iii. 28. p Chap. iv. 5. q Ibid. r Chap. iv. 16.
s Chap. xi. 6. t Chap. iv. 4.

sinner. Instead of believing on him that justifieth the ungodly, he believes, on the contrary, that he cannot be justified till he sustains an opposite character. Though Christ died for *sinners*—for the *ungodly;* yet he does not believe that Christ's death will be of any benefit to him as a mere sinner, but as possessed of holy dispositions; nor does he expect relief to his conscience purely and directly from the atonement, but through the medium of a better opinion of his own heart or character. This sentiment, if he is really concerned about the salvation of his soul, must set him upon attempts to reform his heart, and to do something, under the notion of acting faith, that he may be justified; and all his endeavours, prayers and religious exercises will be directed to that end.

The religion of thousands consists in a train of successive attempts of this kind throughout the whole course of their lives, while they are agitated by alternate hopes and fears, according as they apprehend they have been successful or not in such self-justifying labours. And as, upon this plan, they can receive no relief from the atonement till they perceive some favourable symptons about themselves, those whose consciences are the most tender, and who have the quickest sense of their guilt and depravity, will be the most uneasy and distressed; in which case it has been thought necessary to extract comfort to them from their very convictions, doubts and perplexities, to keep them from absolute despair. But should others, less pinched upon the score of guilt, work themselves up to some degree of hope and

peace by exertions of this kind, such hope does not arise from the work finished by the Son of God, as alone sufficient to justify the ungodly, but from some supposed change wrought upon their own hearts entitling them to trust in him. So that the effect of this principle is either tormenting fear, or self-righteous confidence, and therefore it is equally inimical to true peace and real gospel holiness.

*The* DECLARATION *and* CALL *of the Gospel is unto* ALL.

JESUS commissioned his apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.[z] They were to except to none on account of their *country* or *descent*; "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord is rich unto all that call upon him."[a] Nor were they to make any distinction of *condition* or *sex*; but proclaim it equally to poor and rich, bond and free, male and female.[b] Neither were they to pay any regard to the difference of *characters* among men. The whole world are declared guilty before God;[c] and they were to proclaim salvation to the chief of sinners, as well as to the more decent and strict. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;[d] for he supposed none righteous before God, but in their own conceit: hence he carried a more benign and inviting aspect to self-condemned publicans and harlots, than to self-righteous Pharisees.[e] While the gospel sets aside

z Mark xvi. 16 a Rom. x. 12. b Gal. iii. 28.
c Rom. iii. 19. d Mat. ix. 13. e Mat. xxi. 31.
Luke xviii. 9---15.

every claim to the Divine favour founded upon a man's own righteousness, it also removes effectually every reason of despair from the most guilty and awakened conscience, by presenting an all-sufficient remedy. There are instances on record of the most notorious sinners obtaining mercy, such as Mary Magdalene,[f] the thief on the cross,[g] some of the very betrayers and murderers of the Lord of glory.[h] Several of the Corinthian converts had been fornicators, idolaters, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, &c.;[i] and Paul confesseth that he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, yet he obtained mercy.[k] These instances are recorded, not to encourage men to continue in sin that grace may abound, nor yet as extraordinary stretches of divine grace, which none have now any ground to expect; but that in them "Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting."[l] The gospel declaration, therefore, is to all of every nation, condition, and character, without any limitation or restriction whatever.

The gospel holds forth a *free* salvation, without any consideration of men's good works or qualifications, either to merit it, or prepare and fit themselves for it. Salvation in general, and in all its parts, is every where ascribed to the sovereign free grace of God. "By grace are ye saved."[m] "Not

f Luke vii. 37---50. g Chap. xxiii. 43. h Acts ii. 37---40.
i Cor. vi. 9---12. k 1 Tim. i. 15. l Ver. 16. m Eph. ii. 5

by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."[n] Election, justification, adoption and the heavenly inheritance, are all declared to be of grace;[o] and grace and works are stated in direct opposition to each other in this matter.[p] Salvation is indeed by faith; but faith is also opposed to works,[q] and corresponds with grace; for "it is of faith that it might be by grace."[r] We are saved by grace through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.[s]

The gospel also *calls* all men every where to faith and repentance, and *invites* them in the most earnest manner to partake of a full and free salvation.[t] Jesus himself calls sinners to come unto him;[u] and represents the preaching of the gospel under the notion of inviting guests to a marriage supper, where all things were ready prepared, and free for their use. All sorts of guests are commanded to be invited, and particularly those who might he apt to suppose themselves excluded; such as the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind; and that from every place that could be supposed the haunts of the miserable and the destitute; such as the streets and lanes of the city, the hedges and highways of the field; nay, the master enjoins the servants to "compel them to come in, that his house may be filled with guests."[x] This surely means more than a mere *declaration* of the gospel testimony: it imports also the most earnest *calls* and pressing *invitations* to believe the gospel

n Tit. iii. 5. o Rom. xi. 5. and iii. 24. Eph. i. 5, 6. Rom. iv. 16.
p Rom. xi. 6. q Chap. iv. 5. r Chap. iv. 16. s Eph. i. 8.
t Isa. lv. 1---8. u Mat. xi. 28. John vii. 37, 38. x Luke xiv. 16---24.

and partake of its blessings. Accordingly the apostles, in executing their commission, not only declared "That God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" but also urged it home with the most earnest calls and intreaties; "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech* by us; we pray * in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God."[y] They declared, that God "now commandeth all men every where to repent;"[z] and testified "both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."[a] So that they not only declared the gospel testimony, but called every one to believe it unto their salvation; and urged this call by every motive and argument which the gospel furnished them with, and which are the strongest that possibly can be proposed to the human mind.

### *The* PROMISE *of Salvation is restricted to him that believeth.*

THOUGH the gospel declaration and call be universal to every creature, yet the *promise* of salva-

* The pronoun *you* is not in the Greek. The Apostle is not here urging the believing Corinthians to be reconciled unto God, for he considered them as already reconciled; but he is setting before them the apostolic message to the world at large, as appears from the foregoing verse; and therefore the supplement ought to be *men*, or *the world*.

y 2 Cor. v. 18---21. z Acts xvii. 30, 31. a Chap. iii. 19 xx. 21. and xxvi. 20.

tion is only to him that *believeth:* "He that BELIEVETH, and is baptized, shall be saved."—"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."[b] The gospel does not declare that *all* shall be saved, nor indeed that *any* shall be saved who do not believe; on the contrary, Jesus says, "He that believeth not shall be damned:"—"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."[c] Neither does it reveal who in particular shall believe and be saved; but it declares the testimony of God concerning his Son, and the salvation that is in him, calls upon all mankind to believe that testimony, and promises salvation to every one that believeth it, but to none else. The gospel promise of salvation, therefore, is not universal, but restricted to him that believeth. Hence it is plain,

That the gospel does not hold forth an "universal grant or gift of Christ made to all mankind;" nor does it contain "a promise of eternal life to sinners of mankind *as such.*" Consequently, the faith which it requires of all its hearers at first hand is not "my being verily persuaded that Christ is *mine,* upon the grant and offer of him in the word to *me* in particular, believing that he loved *me,* and gave himself for *me;*—that *I* shall have life and salvation by him; and that whatever he did for the redemption of sinners, he did it for

b Mark xvi. 16, Rom. x. 9. c Mark xvi. 17 John viii. 24.

*me.*"* For the gospel does not declare to *every* man that he shall have life and salvation by Christ, nor is it a truth with respect to a great part of mankind; and therefore cannot be that which all mankind are called to believe unto their salvation. That which men are called to believe is a truth in itself independent of their belief, and will always continue a truth though they should never believe it; for their unbelief cannot make the faith of God without effect. It is a truth openly testified to all, That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, that he hath finished the work of redemption, and that whosoever believeth this shall be saved: but it is

* This and the foregoing quotation is from the Associate Synod's Catechism, Part II. *On faith in Jesus Christ.* But it is not easy to conceive, how God should make a gift to *all*, which conveys nothing but to *some*; and promise eternal life to mankind sinners *as such*, yet never bestow it on any who do not *believe*. As to their definition of justifying *faith*, I would observe, That if all mankind are called to believe that Christ is theirs, that he loved them and gave himself for them, and that they shall have life and salvation by him, then it must either be true or false. If *true*, then all mankind must be saved; if *false* with respect to a great part of mankind, then the gospel can never propose it as a truth to be believed by all. Falsehood can never be converted into truth by believing it; nor can men be reasonably called to believe any thing without evidence, and which is not equally true whether they believe it or not. They endeavour to qualify this by saying, "That faith is not a persuasion that Christ is mine in *possession*, or that I am *already* in a state of grace: but a persuasion that he is mine in the *gift* of God, and *offer* of the gospel." But this distinction only serves to form another contradiction: for how is it possible for me to believe "that Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*; that *I* shall have life and salvation by him; and that whatever he did for the redemption of sinners, he did it for *me*;" and yet "not be persuaded that he is mine in *possession*, or that I am *already* in a state of grace?"

not true "that Christ is *mine*," or "that *I* shall have life and salvation by him," unless I believe the former; for the promise is only to him that believeth. Further,

As the gospel does not promise salvation to any but believers, nor tell any particular person, expressly and directly, that he himself is a believer: so the assurance of a man's own justification is not founded merely upon the *direct testimony* of God,* but also upon the testimony of his own

* Mr. John Barclay (the author of a new appropriating scheme) asserts, "That the assurance of faith," (by which he means the assurance of a man's own justification) "is established, along with the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, upon the *direct testimony* of God, believed in the heart." *Assurance of Faith Vindicated*, Title-page.

A *direct testimony* is that which absolutely affirms, in so many express words, the truth of the particular thing testified. He must therefore mean, that God hath absolutely, positively, and expressly testified in the gospel, "that John Barclay in particular is justified;" for such is the nature of the testimony given to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and he affirms it to be *precisely* the same with that. "Thus verily before God, (says he) by whatever evidence I hold the resurrection of Jesus for a truth, by the *same precise* evidence I must hold it for a truth that I am justified, else I do verily hold God for a liar; for God himself hath equally asserted both the one and the other in words of inseparable connection." *Assurance of Faith Vindicated*, p. 66. And, in *A Letter on the Assurance of Faith*, vol. iii. p. 208. he says, "I see the *same evidence precisely*, that the law is fulfilled for me, even for me myself, by Jesus, as that there is a law at all; the *same evidence* that I am passed from death unto life, as that ever I was under a death, and needed a life; the *same evidence precisely*, that Christ is made to me of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, as that there is a God at all."---As therefore the truth of his particular justification stands upon the *same precise evidence* with the resurrection of Jesus and the existence of God, the additional words "believed in the heart," are altogether redundant: for as Christ's resurrection and the being of God are truths in themselves whether he

conscience, bearing him witness in the Holy Spirit, *that he believes* the gospel testimony concerning Christ, and so *is justified* according to the tenor of the gospel promise.

## *All who really believe the Gospel have Evidence of their own particular Salvation.*

THERE are two important and interesting questions, which all who are truly concerned about their salvation will be anxious to have solved. The first is, How may I, a guilty and condemned sinner, be justified, or find pardon and acceptance with God? The gospel answers this directly, declaring, That

believe or not; so must his justification be, if, according to him, it stand precisely upon the same ground.

This is so absurd that it scarce needs any refutation. The resurrection of Jesus is a foundation principle: a *truth* which stands independent of my believing, and is the subject of *direct* testimony, which I am called to believe *absolutely*. But my particular justification is not *declared to be a truth* until I believe the former; "If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," Rom. x. 9. I cannot therefore know *that I in particular am justified* by any thing openly and directly testified, till I know *that I believe;* for it is only those who believe that are declared to be justified, Acts xiii. 39.

But after all that this author has advanced in order to establish the assurance of his own particular justification upon the *direct testimony* of God, he is obliged at last to depart entirely from that principle, and draw his justification as an *inference* from his believing, thus, "All who believe the record are justified. I believe the record; therefore I believe I am justified." *Assurance of Faith Vindicated*, p. 38. Here the assurance of his justification turns out to be the *conclusion* of what logicians call a syllogism; in which the second proposition (viz. *I believe the record*) is not the *direct testimony of God*, but that of his own conscience.

God justifies sinners "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins."[d] As this exhibits the foundation of hope, so all who believe it must necessarily have hope from it.

The other question is, How shall I know that I am already justified and in a state of salvation? To this the gospel answers in general, "If thou believest with all thine heart,"—"By him all that believe are justified from all things." It assures him that believeth of justification; but it leaves it with every man's conscience to say whether he really believes or not. But then,

All who really believe the gospel must be instantly more or less conscious of it. We are so constituted, that we cannot hear, feel, or see objects without knowing it. The impressions which objects make upon our senses, and our consciousness of these impressions, are inseparable. Our minds are also so framed, that we cannot believe the truth of any report without being immediately conscious that we do so. Whatever produces belief, excites at the same instant an inward consciousness of it; and, in all ordinary cases, we cannot be more sure that *a thing is true*, than that we ourselves *perceive it to be so*. This every man knows by experience. When therefore the light of the glorious gospel shines into the heart of a sinner

d Rom. iii. 24, 25.

with divine evidence, so as to produce conviction that it is the truth and testimony of God, it must necessarily be accompanied with a present consciousness in his mind that he believes it, and is affected by it.

The scripture supposes, that a believer is immediately conscious of his faith; for it calls him at the very first to confess it with his mouth unto salvation.[e] Jesus asks the man whom he had cured of blindness, "Dost THOU BELIEVE on the Son of God?"[f] He also asks his disciples, "But whom SAY YE that I am?"[g] And Philip says to the eunuch, "If THOU BELIEVEST with all thine heart."[h] The confession demanded is that of a man's *own belief*, which no man could make in sincerity and truth without knowing that he believes. Accordingly, the scripture confessions run in this manner; "WE BELIEVE, and are sure that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God."[i]—"By this WE BELIEVE that thou camest forth from God."[k]—"Lord, I BELIEVE."[l]—"I BELIEVE that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."[m]—These confessions express not only their *belief*, but also their *consciousness* of it; and, if we allow them to be sincere, and not spoken in ignorance or hypocrisy, they clearly prove, that those who believe the gospel, know immediately that they do so, and can say, *I believe*. The most of these confessions were made upon their first believing, and before

e Rom. x. 9. f John ix. 35. g Mat. xvi. 15. h Acts viii. 37. i John vi. 69. k Chap. xvi. 30. l Chap. ix. 38 m Acts viii. 37.

their faith had been evidenced by their works. This was evidently the case with the man whose sight was restored, and with the eunuch: while as yet they had done no good works, they declared, without hesitation, that they believed. Indeed, none were then admitted to baptism (the very first ordinance of the gospel) without making the same declaration. They could not, perhaps, answer all the metaphysical questions that men have since agitated about the nature and different kinds of faith; its various acts; the distinction between believing with the head and with the heart; the different manner in which devils and men believe the same truth; what faculties of the soul are engaged in it; how, or by what manner of operation the Spirit works it in the heart, &c. any more than the blind man could philosophize upon the nature of light and vision, or tell how Jesus opened his eyes; yet like him they could say, and with the like consciousness, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."[n] The power of Jesus in giving sight to the blind man, made him instantly sensible that he saw, and left no room for reasoning upon the subject; even so, when the import and evidence of the truth shines into the heart by the enlightening Spirit, it has at once the double effect of producing *belief* and the *consciousness* of it. This consciousness of faith is the first and radical evidence to a man that he is justified according to the gospel promise, and upon this must all

n John ix. 25.

additional and succeeding proofs of it ultimately rest; for good works cannot prove to him that he is justified, unless he is at the same time conscious that they are the fruits of faith and love.

It is recorded as matter of fact, that the first converts to Christianity were filled with *peace* and *joy* as soon as they believed the gospel.[o] Peace with God, and rejoicing in the hope of his glory, are immediately connected with being justified by faith.[p] The "belief that they *may* be justified," or "the hope of being made just,"* though a relief from despair,

* Mr. Glas admits that "the word of God" not only "testifies abundantly the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness to justify the ungodly," but also "assures him that believeth of justification;" yet he denies "that he who is certain of the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness to make him just" (which is justifying faith,) "is yet assured that this righteousness is imputed to him, and that he is made just by it," and the reason he gives why a *believer* is not assured of what the word of God assures him, is, that "it does not assure him that *believeth not* of justification, but the contrary."---He makes the believer to consider his justification merely as a thing *possible* and *future*: "When we believe (says he) on him that raised up Christ, for the justification of the ungodly, we believe that we *may be justified* by this;" and he describes the hope arising from this faith to be "the hope of *being made just*, or of *becoming just* by the imputation of this righteousness;" whereas the word of God assures him that believeth, not only that he *may be*, but that he *actually is* justified, John iii. 36. Acts xiii. 39. He admits that the knowledge of a man's own justification is attainable; but he says, "It cannot appear *any other way* that God imputes this righteousness to us, but by our faith *working with our works*, as Abraham's faith did with his works, when he was declared to be just." *Glas's Works*, vol. ii. p. 73. Edin. edit.

o Acts ii. 24. viii. 39. x. 43, 46. xiii. 48. and xvi. 31---35. 1 Thess. i 5, 6. p Rom. v. 1, 2.

will not fully account for this peace and joy. Believers enjoy peace with God in proportion to the evidence they have that their sins are forgiven them; and their joy is described to be a joy in God through

It is freely granted that good works are an evidence to a man of his own justification, *additional* to what he had when he *first* believed; but they are neither the *only* nor *first* evidence of this. A man must be *conscious* that he believes before his faith work with his works; and in proportion to the degree of this consciousness must be the assurance of his justification from the promise. Abraham was justified when he believed God's promise, Gen. xv. 6. and it cannot be supposed that he had not the least intimation or enjoyment of this until about forty years after, when his faith wrought with his works in offering up Isaac, James ii. 21, 22. for long before this God assured him of his blessing, Gen. xii. 2, 3.---declared himself to be his shield, and exceeding great reward, chap. xv. 1. and gave him the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was yet uncircumcised. Rom. iv. 11.

Mr. Sandeman admits, that "the first effect of faith is joy and peace with God;" but then he says, "If the nature and ground of this joy be inquired into, it will appear that it does not proceed on *any* persuasion that I am a justified person, or that righteousness is imputed to me." *Epist. Corresp.* Let. iv. The whole ground of this peace and joy, according to him, amounts to this, That there is a *possibility* of salvation, or that God is able to save the most guilty, if he pleases. Accordingly, he terms the gospel, "The Divine truth, affording hope to the vilest *that he may be justified*, that he *may* escape the curse and find favour with God.---The revealed *possibility* of deliverance," &c. *Lett. on Theron*, &c. vol. ii. p. 76. All who are not satisfied with the bare *possibility* of their salvation, he charges with ignorance of the Divine justice, and contempt of the Divine sovereignty. *Ignorance of the Divine justice*, as "imagining that something besides this bare truth may contribute more or less to their escape"---*Contempt of the Divine sovereignty*, "because this truth leaves a man, even in the full assurance of faith,---entirely at the mercy of God for his salvation,---without having any claim upon God whatsoever, or finding any reason why God should regard him more than those who perish.,' *Id.* p. 76, 83. Indeed if

the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they have now received the atonement.[q]. The conscience is said to be purged, or made perfect, by the blood of Christ.[r] The sense of guilt in the conscience is a *sure* and *per-*

the gospel revealed only a *possibility* of salvation, without any *promise* of it to him that believeth, no believer of this bare truth, even in the fullest assurance of faith, could have any knowledge of his own salvation in this life. But if God has passed his word, that "he that believeth shall be saved," is it any contempt of his sovereignty to believe him, or to say, that his faithfulness is pledged to make it good? His sovereignty, justice, and faithfulness, perfectly harmonize in their fullest exercise; so that a believer, having the clearest view of the Divine justice, and the greatest reverence for, and submission to the Divine sovereignty, may at the same time have the most joyful hope of his own salvation from the Divine promise. But this author maintains, "that the Divine promise leaves it as much a secret who shall be saved, as the Divine purpose or election does." *Id.* p. 87. The promise indeed leaves it a secret *who shall believe;* this is unknown till it actually takes place. But when once a man believes, it leaves it no secret that *he shall be saved,* for this it expressly declares; so that he has as much evidence from the promise of his *own salvation,* as he has that he *really believes* the saving truth. To show that a believer, even in the full assurance of faith, has no evidence that God is *willing* to save him, both he and Mr Glas produce the faith of those who applied for bodily cures, which appears to be only a persuasion of Christ's *ability. Id.* p. 90, 91. *Glas's Works,* vol. ii. p. 74. But the answer is easy. There was no universal declaration made that Christ *would* heal all the diseased who believed his *power.* Such a declaration would have removed all doubts of his *willingness* from those who believed his *ability,* and have left no room for saying, "If thou *wilt* thou canst make me clean." But the gospel openly declares it to be the will of God, "that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have everlasting life." John vi. 40. And Jesus says, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." ver. 37. This gives the believer a claim upon his *faithfulness,* and leaves him no room to suspect his *willingness.*

q Rom. v. 11. r Heb. ix. 14. and x. 2

*sonal* thing, and the pain occasioned by it is the fear of Divine wrath upon the individual. The atonement *alone*, or *without more*, is sufficient to remove this fear, perfect the conscience, and give peace with God; but it does not produce this effect upon the conscience while the sinner views it only as a *possible* relief, or that by which he *may* be justified, and remains entirely uncertain whether he *is*, or *ever shall* be justified by it or not. A concealed pardon cannot fully relieve or cleanse the conscience. A purged conscience, and the conscious sense of being purged, are one and the same thing. This is stated as a pre-requisite to our serving the living God with freedom and acceptance,[s] and supposes that we both believe the truth, and are conscious that we do so.

The *Spirit of adoption* is also represented as the common privilege of all believers; for as they are "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;"[t] so because they are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts."[u] By this Spirit they know their filial relation to God; for it witnesseth with their spirits, that they are the children of God, and emboldens them to cry, Abba, Father.[x] Agreeably to which, Christ hath taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father," &c.[y]

Another immediate effect of believing the gospel is *love* to God, which supposes the knowledge of his love to us. It is indeed admitted, that when we perceive his good-will towards sinners in general, as

s Heb. ix. 14. t Gal. iii. 26. u Chap. iv. 6.
x Rom. viii. 15, 16. y Mat. vi. 9.

manifested in the gospel, and know that there is forgiveness with him so as to hope in his mercy, it will *reconcile* us to his character, lead us to *esteem* and *reverence* him, and *desire* his favour above every thing, though we should not yet be assured of his love to ourselves in particular; and this, no doubt, is love. But that love which is of the nature of *gratitude*, cannot take place without some degree of persuasion that we ourselves are beloved or benefited by the object of it. Accordingly the Apostle says, "We love him, because he first loved us;"[z] *i. e.* because we *know* this; for he had said before, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us."[a]

*Obedience* is another effect of the belief of the truth. But believers are exhorted to obedience from the consideration of their being redeemed, and already in a justified state. They are commanded to *love* one another, and to *walk* in love, because God hath loved them, and even as Christ loved them, and gave himself for them;[b]—to *forgive* one another, because God for Christ's sake hath forgiven them;[c]—to *liberality* in alms-giving, because they know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for their sakes he became poor, that they through his poverty might be rich;[d]—to *abstain* from *fornication*, because their bodies are the members of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Ghost;[e]—to *glorify God* in their body and spirit which are God's, because they are not their own,

z 1 John iv. 19. a Ver. 16. b John xiii. 34. 1 John iv. 11. Eph. v. 2. c Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13. d 2 Cor. viii. 9. e 1 Cor. vi. 15, 19.

but bought with a price;[f] and to be *holy* in all manner of conversation, passing the time of their sojourning here in *fear;* forasmuch as they know that they were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.[g] These motives evidently suppose that believers know they are in a state of salvation; and that not as a *consequence* of their obedience, but as a *ground* or *reason* of it; for motives, in the order of nature, must be known and believed previous to the conduct which is influenced by them. The knowledge of their salvation, therefore, must originate in, and be constantly supported by the gospel itself standing true in their minds, and so drawing forth the testimony of their conscience that they believe it.

This testimony of conscience will be more or less explicit, according to the degree of faith which is the subject of it; even as faith itself is weak or strong in proportion to the degree of light and evidence with which the gospel by the Spirit shines into the mind, which is the foundation of both.

### *The Fruits of Faith are an additional Evidence to a Man's Conscience of his own Salvation.*

But this first and radical evidence which a man has of his own salvation in believing the gospel, does not supersede every other proof of it to his own conscience. It still leaves room for additional evidence, not that God is true, but that he himself is a true

[f] Ver. 20. [g] 1 Pet. i. 15—20.

believer;* and for this the scripture refers him to the genuine effects of the gospel on his heart and life. The word of God supposes that men may deceive themselves in this important matter;[g] and repels the vain pretensions of such as say they believe, know

* No doubt the truth of God is more and more confirmed to a believer as he experiences the effect of his word, and the accomplishment of his promises: but the point in hand is the evidence of a man's own salvation; and it is one thing to know *that God is true*, and another to know *that I am a true believer*. Mr. Barclay always confounds this distinction, and makes the least doubt of my own justification to be my holding God for a liar. He also absolutely denies that the fruits of faith are any evidence to a man's own conscience that he is justified: and though the word of God plainly and repeatedly declares, that by these *we know* that we are of the truth---that he abideth in us---that we dwell in him---that we have passed from death unto life, &c. 1 John iii. 14, 29, 24. and iv. 14.; yet he boldly wrests these passages, and imposes upon the ignorant, by turning the words (οἰδαμεν and γινωσκομεν) *we know*, into *we acknowledge*, contrary to the sense of the original, the plain scope of the passages, and all propriety of language. He thinks believers are exhorted to the fruits of faith merely to make their justification manifest to others, i. e. to gain the good opinion of their fellow-men. But Paul thought man's judgment a small thing to him in this matter, 1 Cor. iv. 3. His rejoicing was the *testimony of his conscience*, not merely to the soundness of his belief, but also to the *simplicity* and *godly sincerity* of his *conversation* in the world, 2 Cor. i. 12. He supposes that a man may *deceive himself* by thinking himself to be something when he is nothing; and therefore exhorts every believer to prove his own work, that he may have rejoicing (in men's good opinion of him; nay, but) *in himself alone*, and *not in another*, Gal. vi. 3, 4. Peter exhorts believers to give all dilligence to *make their calling and election sure*, by adding to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patiance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity; and adds, "For if "ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be "ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of

g Gal. vi. 3. James i. 22, 26.

God, and have fellowship with him, whilst they walk in darkness and keep not his commandments:[h] Nay, it supposes that men may be enlightened, receive the word with joy, for a while believe, know the way of righteousness, and even escape the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour; and yet after all fall away irrecoverably.[i] These things are set before believers with a view to guard them against presumption, and to awaken in them a cautious fear lest they should grow barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of Christ, and depart from the living God through unbelief.[k]—On the other hand, Jesus said to those who believed on him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."—"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love."[l] His beloved disciple writes in the same strain: "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we

"our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. i. 5---12. But it does not follow, that because *others* may think our calling and election sure, therefore we shall *never fall* but obtain the heavenly kingdom: he must therefore mean, that we should make our calling and election sure to *ourselves*, to our *own consciences* in the sight of God. The Apostle John opposes this assurance to our heart condemning us as destitute of the fruits of faith, particularly love to the brethren; and makes it to consist in *confidence* towards God, the *assurance* of our hearts before him, knowing that we are of the truth from its genuine effects upon us, 1 John iii. 18---22.

h 1 John i. 6. and ii. 4, 5. James ii. 20. i Luke viii. 13. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. and x. 26. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. k John xv. 2, 6. Rom. xi. 19---28. 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. Heb. iii. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 17. 2 John ver. 8. 1 John viii. 31. and xv. 19

are in him.—We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.—Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.—And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."[m] These and such passages clearly show, that believers know their connection with Christ, not merely by conscious belief, but also by faith working by love, and influencing them to keep his commandments. Accordingly they are exhorted to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, by adding to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity;[n] and to show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.[o]

When the gospel first shines into a man's mind with divine light and evidence, making itself manifest in his conscience as the word of the living God, it does not leave him in painful uncertainty either as to his faith or state,* though he be not as

* It is affirmed by some, that when we believe the gospel, and even "rejoice in hope of the glory of God,—it will yet admit of a "jealousy lest we have deceived ourselves, mistaken the truth, or "believed in vain." *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*, vol. ii. p. 305. It indeed not only admits, but promotes self-diffidence, and a cautious fear of sin and its consequences; for *rejoicing* in Christ Jesus implies our having *no confidence* in our own righteousness or strength; and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God consists well with the

m 1 John ii. 5. and iii. 14, 19, 24. n 2 Pet. i. 5—12.
o Heb. vi. 11.

yet conscious of all those effects by which he must afterwards try his faith. But when his faith works with his works, brings forth the fruits of the gospel, and purifies his soul unto the unfeigned love of the brethren, he sees it distinguished from that faith which is dead, being alone.[p] When it overcomes the world, and raises him above the prevailing influence of the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life, his conscience bears him witness that he does not class with the thorny-ground professors.[q] When it supports him under tribulations and trials, so that he does not faint or give way, this trial

constant persuasion, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and that if we draw back from the faith, or live after the flesh, his soul shall have no pleasure in us, we shall die. This cautious fear, which is not tormenting, but holds that place in the spiritual life which the principle of self-preservation does in the natural, is one of the very means of our stability and perseverance. But then, if I suspect that I am deceived or mistaken as to the truth *itself* which is the foundation of faith and hope, it is evident, that, while this suspicion remains, I am not believing the gospel. I may indeed have some general persuasion that the gospel contains the saving truth; but what that is, I cannot with certainty say; for any thing I know, all I perceive of it may be a deception. This, in the very nature of it, is inconsistent with believing; for no man can *believe* any thing with certainty while he suspects it to be a mistake, far less can he have *joy* or *hope* from it till that suspicion is removed. It is a perfect contradiction to affirm, that a man is believing the gospel while he is suspecting he has *believed in vain;* for, according to the Apostle, *believing in vain* is to believe a falsehood which cannot profit, as the gospel would have been had not Christ risen from the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2, 14. If the gospel is true, no man can believe it in vain; and if he suspects he may, he is not believing it, nor rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

p James ii. 17, 20, 26. q Luke viii. 14.

of his faith working patience, and being attended with Divine support and consolation,[r] gives him experience that God is with him, and that he is distinguished from those who receive the word with joy, and for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away.[s] By this his hope is confirmed that he shall endure unto the end, and that his faith will be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.[t] So that as he continues in Christ's word, and grows in conformity to him, his experience of the love of God is enlarged, and the testimony of his conscience strengthened, by the Holy Spirit the Comforter giving him additional manifestations, and more abundant fellowship with Christ in his joy, as the earnest of the heavenly inheritance.[u]

r James i. 3, 4. Rom. v. 3, 4. s Luke viii. 13. t 1 Pet. i. 5 7
u Rom. v. 5. John xiv. 21, 23. and xv. 9---12. Eph. i. 13, 14.

## PART II.

### THE FORM, SUBJECTS, AND IMPORT OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

——*Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

THE next branch of the commission which follows in order, is a command to *baptize:* "Baptizing them." Here I shall inquire a little into the outward form, the subjects, and import of this institution.

#### *What* BAPTIZING *is.*

THE ACTION enjoined is *baptizing;* but the question is, What kind of action is that? Is it washing, pouring, sprinkling, or dipping? Many will tell us, that it is any of them we please; which indicates no great reverence for Christ's authority. He surely must have meant one kind of action, and have used a word sufficiently determinate to express the manner of it, and to distinguish it from every other. It is of importance to know what particular kind of action he intends by *baptizing.* No less depends upon it than obedience to his command; for any other action is not his ordinance at all.

*Baptize* (βαπτιζω) is a Greek word which our translators have only anglicised, but never translated,

when expressive of this ordinance. It signifies properly to *dip, plunge,* or *immerse;* and that in distinction from every other mode of washing, as well as from sprinkling or pouring, which are expressed in the original by other words. This sense of the word is admitted by all the Pedobaptists of any note; and no instance has yet been produced, either from scripture or any ancient Greek writer, where it must necessarily bear another sense.

Neither the words *pour* nor *sprinkle* make sense when substituted in the place of *baptize;* for the original expression is always *baptizing in* or *into* a thing. For instance,—EN or EIS, *in* or *into* Jordan;[c]—EN, *in* water, *in* the Holy Ghost:[d]—EIS *into* the name,[e] *into* Moses,[f] *into* Christ,[g] *into* his death.[h] EIS cannot be translated *unto* or *towards* in the case of baptism; because it would be nonsense to say, that John baptized *unto* or *towards* Jordan. Nor can EN be rendered *by* in this case, for it would be awkward to say, John baptized *by* Jordan. Neither can it be rendered *with,* for the reason just now mentioned, and also because EIS, which is used indifferently with it on this subject, cannot be so rendered. As, therefore, baptism is always represented as being performed *in* or *into* a thing, it must be immersion, and not sprinkling or pouring; for *persons* cannot be sprinkled or poured *into* water, though they may be dipt or immersed *into* it.

c Matt. iii. 6. Mark i. 9. d Matt. iii. 11. e Chap. xxviii. 19. f 1 Cor. x. 2. g Gal. iii. 27. h Rom. vi. 3.

The English reader may be fully satisfied from other circumstances, that baptism is immersion. Jesus having been baptized in Jordan, *went up out of the water,* which shews he had been down into it.[i] After Philip and the eunuch had already come unto a certain water, we are told, *they went both down into the water* that he might baptize him; and when this was performed, they *came up out of the water.*[k] John required a large quantity of water to baptize in, and so we find him using the river Jordan for that purpose.[l] He also baptized in Enon near to Salim, for this very reason, *because there was much water there.*[m] Now there was no need for *much water,* or for *going down into it,* in order to pour or sprinkle a little of it on the face; but these circumstances were absolutely necessary in order to dip or immerse the whole body, which therefore must have been the action originally performed, as all the judicious and candid Pœdobaptists have acknowledged.

The allusions made to baptism as the sign of a *burial* and *resurrection,* clearly point out the manner of administering it. Believers are said to be baptized into the death of Christ, to be *buried* with him by baptism, and therein also to be *risen* with him.[n] Now, in whatever sense Christians are buried and risen with Christ, it cannot be *in baptism,* if there is no exhibition of a burial and resurrection in that ordinance; but if baptism is a burial in, and resurrection from water, then the sign strikingly cor-

i Matt. iii. 16. Mark i. 10. k Acts viii. 36, 38, 39. l Mark i. 5. m John iii. 23. n Rom. vi. 3, 4. Col. ii. 12.

responds with the thing signified, and the allusion to it is pertinent and just. Upon the whole, therefore it is clear, that the action enjoined is *immersion;* and that any other action is not merely a different *mode* of baptism, but a different *thing* altogether. It is not *baptizing,* and so not Christ's institution.

### *The* ELEMENT.

THE body is to be buried or immersed in WATER. This admits of no dispute. John says, "I "baptize you in *water.*"[o] He baptized in the *river* of Jordan, and at Enon, because there was much water there.[p] The apostles understood their commission as a command to baptize in water; for when the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and his kinsmen, Peter says, "Can any man forbid *water* "that these should not be baptized, who have re- "ceived the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he "commanded them to be baptized,"[q] &c. And here I cannot but notice how widely the apostle differs from some modern professors, who maintain, that if they have what they call the baptism of the Spirit, it is of little consequence whether they are baptized in water or not. Cornelius and his friends had really obtained what our Lord calls baptism in the Spirit;[r] yet Peter was so far from considering this as superseding baptism in water, or rendering it needless, that he, on the contrary, makes the former an argument for the latter, and looks upon it

o Matt. iii. 1. p John iii. 23. q Acts x. 47, 48. r Acts i. 5. with chap. xi. 15, 16.

as withstanding God to forbid water to such as had received the Holy Spirit.[s]

*The* NAME *into which believers are to be baptized.*

Our Lord here commands his apostles to baptize the disciples (εἰς) "into the name of the Father, and "of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The phrase *in the name*, sometimes signifies, *for the sake of, in the strength of, by the authority of, invoking the name of*, &c. and doubtless baptism ought to be administered with a view to God's authority, depending on his assistance and blessing, and calling upon his name for that purpose. But here, I apprehend the expression *into the name*, chiefly signifies, *into the faith of the gospel.* Old Israel are said to have been "baptized *into Moses* in the cloud and in the sea;"[t] that is, into the religion established by the ministry of Moses. So Christians are said to be baptized *into Christ*;[u] that is, into the faith or religion of Christ: And this is frequently called his *name.* Philip preached the things concerning the *name* of Jesus Christ;[x] the apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his *name*;[y] Paul thought he ought to do many things contrary to the *name* of Jesus;[z] he was a chosen vessel to bear his *name* before the Gentiles,[a] &c. In these passages it evidently means the *faith* or the *doctrine* of Christ. So he himself explains it: "Thou holdest fast my *name*, and hast not denied

s Chap. xi. 17. t 1 Cor. x. 2. u Gal. iii. 27. x Acts viii. 12.
y Acts v. 41. z Chap. xxvi. 9. a Chap. ix. 15.

" my *faith*:"[b]—" Thou hast kept my *word*, and hast not denied my *name*."[c] Here his *name* signifies the same thing with his *faith* or *word*: which may very properly be called his name, as it makes him known or reveals his true character. Agreeably to this he addresses his Father, saying, " I have *manifested* " *thy name* unto the men whom thou gavest me out " of the world."—And he shows how he did so; " For I have *given unto them the words* which thou gavest me."[d] To baptize, therefore, " into the " name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the " Holy Ghost," is to baptize into the faith or doctrine of the gospel, which is testified by the Divine Three who are one;[e] which reveals them in their distinct and relative characters, and manifests their glory as acting their respective parts in the economy of redemption; the gospel being a revelation " of " the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of " Christ."[f]

Christians are to be baptized " into the name of " the *Father* and of the *Son*," in distinction from *idolatrous heathens*, who do not acknowledge the one true God, but have many false gods and lords: " For (says the Apostle) though there be that are " called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as " there be gods many, and lords many;) but to us " there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all " things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, " by whom are all things, and we by him."[g] And also in distinction from *unbelieving Jews* and De-

b Rev. ii. 13. c Chap. iii. 8. d John xvii. 6, 8.
e 1 John v. 7. f Col. ii. 2. g 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

ists; who, though they acknowledge one God, yet deny the *Son*, and consequently the *Father*, who is revealed only by and in relation to him: for "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;" and, "whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." But the true believer "acknowledgeth the Son" in the dignity of his person, mission, and supreme authority, as the one Lord, and so "hath the Father also;" as he "abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he "hath both the Father and the Son."[h] The faith of the Father and Son must therefore be professed in baptism, for it is a baptism into that faith; and so the Apostle connects with the one *baptism*, the one *faith* which respects one *Lord*, and one *God and Father* of all.[i] They must also be baptized into the name of the *Holy Ghost*, who is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, and whose office it is to testify of Christ, and apply his salvation to men, by enlightening, convincing, comforting, sanctifying, and sealing them unto the day of redemption.[k] The Holy Spirit was not given in a way peculiar to the gospel dispensation during John's baptism,[l] nor till Christ was glorified;[m] but when Jesus ascended on high, and received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he poured him forth upon his church, both in his gifts (some of which were extraordinary and miraculous, for revealing and confirming the gospel at first,) and

h 1 John ii 23. 2 John ver. 9. i Eph. iv. 5, 6. k John xvi. 7---16. Rom. v. 5. 2 Thess. ii. 13. Eph. i. 13, 14. and iv. 30.
l Mat. iii. 11. Acts xix. 2, 3. m John vii. 38, 39.

also in his saving influences, which are common to all the saints.[n] And as the soul in the natural body is the principle of life, action, and unity; so the Holy Spirit, communicated from Christ the risen and living head, is as the common soul of his mystical body the church, which animates and actuates every particular member, diffuses a mutual sympathy through all the parts, and unites the whole as it were into one living system.[o] Thus by one Spirit they are all baptized into one body, and are all made to drink into one Spirit.[p] Now as this is signified to them in baptism, so they are baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, holiness, and consolation. Accordingly we find the Apostle connecting the one Spirit with the one baptism.[q]

*The* SUBJECTS *of this Ordinance.*

THE SUBJECTS of baptism are signified in the commission by the word *them*:—"Baptizing them." Not every individual in the nations; but only such as they should previously teach with effect, or make disciples by teaching. The word (AUTOUS) *them* in the original is masculine, and does not agree with (PANTA TA ETHNE) *all nations*, which is neuter; but refers to (MATHETAS) *disciples*, which is included in the verb (MATHETEUEIN) *to teach* or *disciple*. So the sense is, Teach all nations, baptizing *them that are taught* or *made disciples*. This is clear from the parallel place in Mark, which restricts

n Acts ii. 33. Eph. iv. 7---14. Gal. v. 22---25. Rom. viii. 9.
o 1 Cor. xii. Eph. iv. 16. p 1 Cor. xii. 13. q Eph. iv. 4, 5

baptism to him that believeth: "He that *believeth* and is baptized." It is plain, therefore, that none are commanded to be baptized, but such as are first taught or made disciples, and profess to believe the gospel.

But what puts this beyond all possibility of doubt, is the uniform practice of the inspired apostles in executing this commission, who never baptized any till once they had made them disciples by teaching. Peter on the day of Pentecost began with preaching the gospel to the Jews, and none but "they who *gladly received* his word were baptized."[r] He first taught Cornelius and his house, but he baptized none of them till the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they *magnified* God, having their hearts purified by *faith*.[s] Philip in the first place preached the gospel to the Samaritans; but it was not till "they *believed* Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus," that "they were baptized, both men and women."[t] He also preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, but did not baptize him till he made an explicit profession of his *faith*.[u] Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord at Philippi to Lydia and others; but they did not baptize her till the Lord *opened her heart* to *attend* unto the things which were spoken. Her household also were baptized in consequence of their believing, for they are called *brethren*, and were *comforted* by the Apostle and his company at their departure.[x]

r Acts ii. 41. s Chap. x. 44---48 and xv. 9. t Chap. viii. 12
u Ver. 35, 37, 38. x Chap. xvi. 13, 14, 15 40.

They also "spake the word of the Lord unto the "Jailer and to all that were in his house," but they baptized none of them till they believed; for we are told, that he "*rejoiced, believing* in God *with all his house*."[y] * Many of the Corinthians were baptized: but we are expressly told that it was in consequence of their *hearing* the gospel and *believing* it.[z] We read also of two households being baptized at Corinth; one of them was that of Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, of whom it is said that he *believed* on the Lord *with all his house*:[a] the other was the house of Stephanas;[b] and that these were believers is evident from the Apostle's account of them a little while after; "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that they have *addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)* that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth."[c] I might also mention the baptism of Paul himself,[d] and of the beloved Gaius his host;[e] but I suppose none will

* The adverb πανοικι (of πας *all*, and οικος *house*) is rightly rendered *with all his house;* for in this sense the LXX. use that word in Exod. i. 1. "Now these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into "Egypt, every man (וביתו, πανοικι) *and his house*," or *with all his house*. Josephus also, speaking of the law respecting the offerings allotted for the priests' maintenance, says, it was appointed, "that they (πανοικι), "*with their whole families*, might eat them in the holy city." *Antiq.* b. iv. ch. iv. § 4. The law he refers to runs thus: "In the most holy place shalt thou eat it.---I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it." Numb. xviii. 10---20.

y Acts ii. 32, 33, 34. z Chap. xviii. 8. a Chap. xviii. 8. 1 Cor. i. 14. b 1 Cor. i. 16. c 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. d Acts ix. 18. e 1 Cor. i. 14. Rom. xvi. 23. 3 John ver. 1---7.

question that they were believers previous to their baptism.

These are all the instances of baptism, in consequence of our Lord's commission, which are expressly recorded in the scriptures; and we see it was administered to none but professed disciples. I had almost forgot the baptism of Simon Magus; but this is no exception; for, previous to his baptism, it is said, "Then Simon himself *believed* also;"[f] which imports, at least, that he *professed* to believe; and this was a sufficient warrant for Philip, who could not know his heart, to administer baptism to him. Whether, therefore, we consider the plain words of the commission itself, or the uniform practice of the inspired apostles in executing it, it is evident to a demonstration, that baptism does not belong to professed infidels, ignorant persons, or mere infants, but only to professed believers of the gospel.

What has been said may satisfy any simple unprejudiced person as to the *subjects* of this divine ordinance; but as many sophistical arguments have been invented in support of infant-sprinkling, it may be proper to take notice of those of them upon which the chief stress is laid.

The Pœdobaptists in general confess, that there is neither *express precept* nor *indisputable example* in the word of God for the baptism of infants; yet they think it may be established by *analogy* and *inference*. But it should be carefully remembered,

f Acts viii. 13.

that baptism is not like *natural* or *moral* duties, which are founded in, and may be inferred from the nature and relation of things. It is a *positive* institution, which depends entirely upon the will of the Institutor, both as to its nature and all its circumstances; and it becomes our duty, merely by the revelation of that will, either in express *precept*, or in such clear and approved *precedents* as necessarily infer that such a precept was originally given. If neither of these can be produced for the baptism of infants, all argumentation on the subject is vain; for a positive institution can never be made out by mere reasoning. Further, if the commission restricts baptism to professed *believers*, and if it was administered only to *such*, as has been shown, then every argument for the baptism of infants must be false, because infants fall not under that description; and this as clearly forbids their baptism, as their inability to *examine* themselves, or *discern* the Lord's body, prohibits their admission to the Lord's supper.

1. It is argued, that as the infants of Old Israel were circumcised, therefore the infants of believers should be baptized.

But circumcision and baptism materially differ in many things, and therefore we cannot infer the latter from the former. Circumcision was annexed to the peculiar covenant of promise made with Abraham, which respected two future covenants; the *old*, made at Sinai with his fleshly seed;[g] and the *new*, made in Christ's blood with his spiritual seed

g Deut. xxix. 13.

of all nations:[h] but it was appropriated to the first of these covenants, which was temporal and typical, and accordingly was set aside along with it; whereas baptism pertains only to the new covenant, which is the antitype of the former. Circumcision belonged to the *natural seed* of Abraham as such, without any distinction, or regard to the spiritual birth:[i] and accordingly Ishmael was circumcised;[k] but baptism belongs only to such as appear to be the *spiritual seed* of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus, and heirs according to the promise.[l] And so we find John the Baptist setting aside the Jewish claims founded upon their descent from Abraham;[m] for though this was a valid plea for circumcision, it could not avail for baptism, which belongs only to those who appear to be regenerated or born again.[n] Circumcision was restricted to *males*, whilst it was extended to a man's *servants* and *slaves*;[o] but baptism extends to *females* as well as males, to Jew and Greek, bond and free, without difference, whilst it is restricted to such of these as *believe*.[p] The circumcision made by hands *in the flesh* of Abraham's *natural seed*, prefigured the circumcision *of the heart* of his *spiritual seed*, the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh;[q] but baptism presupposes the subjects of it already circumcised in heart, and signifies their communion with, and conformity to Christ in his

h Gal. iii. and iv. Heb. viii. 7---13. i Gen. xvii. 9---15. k Ver. 25. l Mark xvi. 16. Acts viii. 37 Gal. iii. 26---29. and iv. 28. m Mat. iii. 9. n John i. 12, 13. and iii. 3. 5. o Gen. xvii. 10---15. p Acts viii. 12. Gal. iii. 27, 28, 29. q Rom. ii. 29. Col. ii. 11.

death, burial and resurrection.[r] Much stress has been laid upon circumcision being termed *a seal of the righteousness of the faith*,[s] as if it had been such a seal to the infant seed of Abraham. But the whole weight of this argument rests upon the sound of words taken out of their connection. The Apostle is showing that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness in uncircumcision,[t] and that "he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had yet* being uncircumcised:" *i. e.* Abraham himself was justified by faith before he was circumcised,[u] and he received circumcision afterwards as a seal that he was thus justified, and that the Gentile should in like manner be justified in uncircumcision.* But he did not receive it in this sense as the father or representative of his *natural seed* as such, but only as the father of all who like him should *believe*, whether they are Jews or Gentiles; for the Apostle expressly tells us, that Abraham was justified by faith, and then received circumcision as the seal of it, for this end, "that he might be the father of *all them that believe*, though they be not circumcised (*i. e.* of believing Gentiles), that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision unto them (*viz.* believing Jews), who are

* The original is, σφραγιδα της δικαιοσυνης της πιστεως εν τη ακροβυστια, "a seal of the righteousness of that faith which is in the uncircumcision," *i. e.* of God's justifying the heathen through faith without circumcision, as he did Abraham.

r Rom. vi. 3—8. Col. ii. 12, 13. s Rom. iv. 11. t Ver. 9, 10. u Gen. xv. 6.

not of the circumcision only, but also *walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham* which he had being yet uncircumcised."[x] If, therefore, circumcision was not a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham, in relation to his natural seed as such, no argument can be drawn from it for the baptism of the natural infant seed of believers. If we admit the scripture doctrine concerning the different state of things under the two covenants, and the distinction of Abraham's twofold seed,[y] the argument from analogy must stand thus: That as under the first covenant circumcision belonged to all the *natural seed* of Abraham, who were known to be such in infancy by their fleshly birth; so, under the new covenant, baptism belongs to all the *spiritual seed* of Abraham by faith in Christ Jesus, who are known to be such only by their profession of that faith. So that it does not conclude for the baptism of infants, but the contrary.

2. Jesus says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."[z] From this it is argued, that since the infants of believers belong to the kingdom of God, they must have a right to baptism.

But this passage does not *distinguish* the infants of believers from those of infidels, nor conclude for the baptism of the former more than for that of the latter. The *kingdom of God*, to which little children are declared to belong, is his real *invisible kingdom*, which will not truly appear until Christ's second

x Rom. iv. 11, 12. y Chap. ix. 6 7. 8. Gal. iii. and iv. Heb. viii. z Mark x. 14.

coming;[a] for it is that kingdom which none can enter but such as receive it as a little child,[b] and are really *converted* and *born again*.[c] But baptism belongs to the present *visible appearance* of that kingdom in this world, which includes many false professors, because men are unable to distinguish them;[d] and as this appearance is only to be seen in the *outward profession* of the faith, so infants being incapable of that profession, are not *visible* subjects of his kingdom, and so have no right to baptism, which belongs only to his kingdom as it is *visible* to men. But there is no room for much reasoning on this passage. Either these infants were baptized, or they were not. If they were, the controversy is at an end; if they were not, then they ought not. That they were not baptized is evident: They were not brought for that purpose, but "that he should put his hands on them and pray."[e] Jesus himself did not baptize them, for he baptized none;[f] nor did he order his disciples to do it; nor would they have forbidden infants to be brought unto him, if they had known any thing about infant-baptism. If, therefore, while Jesus was rebuking his disciples for forbidding infants to come unto him; if while he was declaring infants to be of his kingdom, taking them up in his arms and blessing them; if while he had such a fair opportunity of being explicit as to their baptism, and of setting an example of it, that might have prevented all the disputes which

a 2 Pet. i. 11. 2 Tim. iv. 1. b Mark x. 15. c Mat. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. d Mat. xiii. 47, 48. and xxv. 2. Acts viii. 13. e Mat. xix. 13. f John iv. 2.

he foresaw would arise on that subject: I say, if on such an occasion, he neither baptized them himself; nor commanded them to be baptized, nor so much as gave the least hint of his will that such should be baptized in future; what can we reasonably infer from all this, but that infant-baptism is no institution of his, nor was ever intended by him? We may also learn from this passage what some do not seem to understand, viz. that infants may be acknowledged of Christ's kingdom, brought unto him, and obtain his blessing, without being baptized.

3. Peter, addressing the convicted Jews, says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."[g] Hence it is pleaded, That since the promise of salvation is made unto the infant children of believers as well as to themselves, therefore they ought to be baptized.

But this argument is grounded upon a complication of mistakes. The *promise* here referred to is not the promise of salvation in general, but the promise of the Spirit in particular, which he had before cited from Joel ii. 28—32,[h] and which includes the extraordinary gifts which were peculiar to the first age of the gospel. This promise began to be accomplished on the day of Pentecost, as the apostle shows verse, 16, 33. and was made in the first place to the

g Acts ii 38, 39. h See Acts ii. 16---22.

Jews and their children, to whom he directly applies it as an encouragement to repentance; for he did not properly understand till afterwards that the Gentiles were to partake with them in these extraordinary gifts.[i] The *children* to whom this promise is made must of necessity be the very same that are mentioned in the promise itself, and who are there termed *your sons* and *your daughters*;[k] and therefore cannot signify infant children, for they are such as should *prophesy* upon receiving the Spirit, as we see was actually the case.[l] When our Lord says, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do *your children* cast them out?"[m] By *your children*, he neither means infants nor the particular offspring of those he is immediately addressing. Nor is this promise restricted to the children of *believers*, for many of the children of unbelieving Jews received the Spirit. Neither does it extend to the whole Jewish nation, but only to whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord* and be *delivered*, whether *in mount Zion*, or *in Jerusalem*, or *in the remnant whom the Lord shall call*,[n] as the apostle Paul also observes.[o] If this, therefore, is the sense in which Peter understood and applied the promise of the Spirit in Joel, as it evidently is, then it can furnish no argument for infant-baptism, because infants are not intended in this passage. But though we should, for argument's sake, take the promise in the most extensive view, as signifying the ordinary influences of the Spirit which are common to all

i Acts x. 24---48. and xi. 15, 16, 17. k Acts ii. 17. Joel ii. 28.
l Acts ii. 4. x. 46. xix. 6. and xxi. 9. 1 Cor. xii. 8---12. m Mat. xii. 27.
n Joel ii. 32. Acts ii. 21, 39. o Rom. ix. 27. and xi. 5.

Christians to the end of time,[p] and as extending both to Jews and Gentiles with their offspring; yet unless we also expunge the *limiting clause*, it will never conclude for their baptism while infants. The original promise is restricted to "the remnant whom the Lord shall call;"[q] or, as Peter quotes it, "even to as many as the Lord our God shall call:"[r] but mere infants, while such, cannot manifest that they are actually called of the Lord or partakers of his Spirit: and therefore have no right to baptism upon that ground. Had this promise respected infant children, and been understood as a warrant for their baptism, then they must have been immediately baptized with their parents; but we read of none receiving baptism on this occasion, but such as *gladly received* Peter's word, were the same day *added* to the church, and continued stedfastly in the apostle's *doctrine* and *fellowship*, and in *breaking of bread*, and in *prayers*;[s] even as the multitude baptized in Samaria are expressly declared to be believing *men* and *women*.[t] It is the extremity of folly and perverseness to argue against plain facts.

4. The apostle says, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."[u] The argument from this is, That as the children even of one believing parent are holy, as being in covenant with God; therefore they ought to have the seal of that covenant in baptism.

p Rom. viii. 9. q Joel ii. 32. r Acts ii. 39. s Chap. ii. 41. 42. t Chap. viii. 12. u 1 Cor. vii. 14.

But the apostle had no such thing in his eye; nor would this sense of the passage have suited his purpose, or have satisfied the scruples of the believing Corinthians. Their question was not, Are our children possessed of new-covenant holiness, and so intitled to baptism? but (as appears from the answer) it was this, May we lawfully retain our unbelieving wives, or must we put them away as Old Israel were obliged to do by the law of Moses?[x] To this he answers, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away," &c. And he gives this reason for it, "For the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband."—This *sanctification* of the unbelieving wife to the believer, being opposed to the legal uncleanness of an alien to a Jew, must relate purely to the marriage relation, and signify that she was a *lawful wife* to him, even as the meats formerly held unclean by the law of Moses were now sanctified to him, or made lawful for his use.[y] And what other sanctification or holiness can we suppose an unbeliever, while such, capable of? He farther observes, that unless their unbelieving wives were thus sanctified, their children would also be unclean; "Else were your children unclean."—The *uncleanness* of the children being stated as a consequence of the supposed unlawfulness of the unbelieving party, must necessarily signify *illegitimacy*; for though they were begot in marriage, yet upon supposition that the marriage itself were unlawful, they must of consequence have been an *unlawful issue*.—"But now

x Deut. vii. 3. Ezra x. y 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.

are they holy." This *holiness* of the children can signify nothing more than *legitimacy;* because it is *opposed* to their uncleanness, as above explained; and because it is stated as an *effect* of the sanctification of the unbelieving parent, without which, the apostle affirms, they would be unclean: it must therefore be a holiness of the same kind; for spiritual holiness can never depend upon, or flow from, the sanctification of an unbeliever. As the unbelieving party is sanctified, or made holy, only in respect of her being a *lawful wife* to the believer, so the children can have no holiness in consequence of this, but that of being a *lawful issue,* which affords no argument for their baptism.

5. We read that Lydia was baptized and "her household;"[z]—that the Jailer "was baptized, he and all his, straightway;"[a] and that Paul "baptized also the household of Stephenas."[b] These passages are urged as exhibiting examples of baptizing infants, taking it for granted that those houses contained infants who were baptized upon the faith of their parents.

But this is only begging the question in debate. It must first be proved that there were infants in the houses mentioned, for there are many houses without them; and though this were done, which it never can, it still remains to be proved that they were baptized; for the universal expression *all the house,* sometimes signifies only the *adult part* of it.[c] But the scripture account of these baptized houses demonstrates that they were not infants. *All* the house

z Acts xvi. 5. a Ver. 33. b 1 Cor. i. 16. c Judg. ix 6.

of Cornelius *feared God,* and *received the Holy Ghost.*[d] Lydia's household were *comforted as brethren.*[e] The word of the Lord was *spoken to all* in the Jailer's house; and they *all rejoiced, believing* in God as well as himself.[g] *All* the house of Crispus *believed* on the Lord,[h] and the house of Stephanas *addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.*[i] Now if these things, which are affirmed of *all* the baptized, will not apply unto infants, then it is plain there were no infants baptized in those houses. Let us now consider,

## *The* IMPORT *and* DESIGN of BAPTISM.

THIS is a branch of the subject which has been too little attended to by many. The universal practice of sprinkling infants, with the principles adopted and arguments used in support of that human invention, have not only set aside the *subjects* and *form* of Christ's institution, but in a great measure obscured and perverted its *signification*; so that it is amazing to observe the ignorance which prevails among professors on this head, though they have the New Testament among their hands. Some look upon it as little more than the ceremony of giving a *name* to their child. Many consider it a *christening,* or making them Christians; hence their anxiety to have them sprinkled betimes lest they should die Pagans. Others who pretend to more knowledge, view it as a sign whereby their infants are initiated into the *visible church,* though they are neither agreed as to what

d Acts x. ii. 44, 47. e Acts xvi. 40. f Ver. 32. g Acts xvi. 34. h Chap. xviii. 8. i 1 Cor xvi. 15.

that church is, nor admit them into the full communion of any visible church. They also look upon it as the *seal* of some *covenant*, which, they say, is made with a believer and his natural seed; yet they are not agreed as to the nature of that imaginary covenant, or whether it entails salvation, or only a right to some outward privileges. Many view it as the parent's *dedication* of his child to God, accompanied with a *vow* or *engagement* to bring it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; while others, disclaiming dedications, vows, and engagements, make it to be a sign to the parent that Christ is as *able* to save his child as himself, and that he must enter the kingdom of God as destitute of any *good qualification* as his infant is. Thus every one annexes a signification to baptism agreeable to his own favourite hypothesis, whilst all of them have been accommodated to the baptism of infants. But as the scripture contains no such institution, so neither does it give us any of the above views as the design of baptism. If we consult the word of God, we shall find that this divine ordinance is intended,

1. To be a sign of *regeneration*, or that the person baptized is *born of the Spirit*. Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."[k] *Water* here undoubtedly means the water of baptism,* for it is distinguished from the *Spirit;* so that

* So this passage and Tit. iii. 5. were universally understood until the days of Calvin; since which time some modern writers, with a view to set aside the necessity of baptism to salvation, and the horrid doctrine of the

k John iii. 5.

to be *born of water* is to be baptized, even as to be *born of the Spirit* is to be regenerated; and as the former is connected with the latter, and termed a *birth* in reference to it, it must be the visible sign or representation of the spiritual birth. This is farther evident from Tit. iii. 5. "According to his mercy he

Romish church concerning the state of unbaptized infants, have explained the expressions *born of water*, and *the laver of regeneration*, of the purifying operations of the Spirit, which are indeed sometimes spoken of under the metaphor of water, Isa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. John vii. 37. 38. But this gloss converts these passages into the most unmeaning repetitions. Surely our Lord could never mean to say, "Except a man be born of the Spirit, and of the Spirit;" or his inspired Apostle to affirm, that "he saved us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." They produce Mat. iii. 11. as a tautology of the same kind; "Baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." But the cloven tongues like as of fire, to which this refers (Acts ii. 2, 3.) were only the *visible symbol* in which the Spirit, who is *invisible*, descended upon the Apostles; and so is no tautology, because distinguishable. As to the *necessity* of baptism to salvation, it is not stronger expressed in these passages than in some others, concerning which there is no dispute; such as "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark xvi. 16. "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us," &c. 1 Pet. iii. 21.---"Be baptized and wash away thy sins," Acts xxii. 16. If it be said that the chief stress is here to be laid upon *believing*, and the *thing signified* in baptism, the same may be said of the passages under consideration, without excluding baptism itself, which is evidently intended in them. Baptism cannot be necessary to infants, for whom it was never intended, who can neither observe nor reject it, any more than they can believe or disbelieve the gospel, and so are entirely out of the question. Nor is it absolutely necessary to such as never heard of it, or who cannot possibly obtain it. Christ requires no impossibilities. It is not the mere want, but wilful contempt or neglect of it, which condemns men; for it is the *thing signified* which saves. But should they make light of baptism, knowing it to be a standing institution of Christ, and neglect it when it is in their power, however high their pretensions may be in other respects, we are warranted from our Lord's words to tell them, they cannot enter his kingdom without repentance: and this is no more than what may be said of the like treatment of his other commandments.

saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Two things are here pointed at, One is baptism, called *the washing*, or rather (λουτρον) *laver of regeneration*, because it is the sign of it. The other is regeneration itself, or the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which is the thing signified in baptism. Our Lord makes this ordinance necessary to our entering into the kingdom of God; which imports at least, that as none can *really* enter that kingdom without being born of the Spirit; so none can *visibly* enter it without being born of water, nor indeed have they ground to think that they shall enter it in any sense, if they wilfully despise this ordinance, and throw contempt upon the authority of its Institutor, which is expressly declared to be no less than "rejecting the counsel of God against themselves."[l]

2. It represents to the repenting believer the *remission* or *washing away of his sins* in the blood of Christ. Accordingly Peter exhorts the convicted Jews, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."[m] Ananias, in his address to Paul, expresses this still stronger: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."[n] This manner of speaking will appear very extravagant to many now-a-days, who look upon baptism as a mere empty rite or arbitrary precept. To be baptized *for the remission* or *washing away of sins*, plainly imports,

l Luke vii. 29, 30. m Acts ii. 38. n Chap. xxii. 16.

that in baptism the remission of sins is represented as *really conferred* upon the believer. The gospel promises in general, that through Christ's name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."[o] Baptism applies this promise, and represents its *actual accomplishment* to an individual believer; assuring him, that all his past sins are now as really washed away in the blood of Christ, as his body is washed in water. Baptism represents the atoning blood of Christ, not merely as shed upon the cross when he bore the curse for us;[p] but as obtaining deliverence from that curse, and the reward of eternal life from the God of peace in his resurrection,[q] (he being raised again for our justification),[r] and also carried with him into the heavenly sanctuary, and presented unto God, where, as our High-priest and Advocate, he appears with acceptance in the Divine presence for us.[s] It is this manifested and applied to the conscience that perfects or purges it from dead works to serve the living God, which the legal purifications could not do;[t] and as baptism is the visible representation and application of this, Peter calls it (αντιτυπον) the antitype of the salvation of Noah and his family from water by the lifting up of the ark, while he also contrasts it with the ceremonial cleansings which sanctified only to purifying of the flesh. His words are: "The antitype of which, baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the

o Acts. x. 43. p Gal. iii. 13. q Heb. xiii. 20. r Rom iv. 25. s Heb ix. 12. 24. t Chap. ix. 13, 14.

resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God,"[u] &c.

Baptism also represents the washing away of the *filth* or *pollution* of sin both from the heart and future life of a Christian. Hence the Apostle connects with it the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh;"[x] the destruction of the body of sin, that henceforth we should not serve it.[y] Considered therefore as a *washing* or *cleansing*, it represents both our *justification* from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ, and our *sanctification* from its inherent pollution and power by his word and Spirit That baptism imports this twofold cleansing is clear from Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify her (καθαρισας τω λουτρω του ὑδατος εν ῥηματι) having cleansed in the laver of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

Three things are here mentioned in sanctifying and cleansing the church. 1. Christ's *giving himself for* her, that he might sanctify or cleanse her from the *guilt* of sin, and dedicate or consecrate her unto God by his own blood. Thus, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all;"[z] and thus "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."[a] He also gave himself for her to cleanse her from the pollution of sin, and free her

u 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. x Col. ii. 11. y Rom. vi. 6.
z Heb. x. 10. a Chap. xiii. 12

from its dominion and servitude, that so she may be without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish. Both which ends of Christ's death are also mentioned in Tit. ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." —2. This twofold cleansing is here said to be (τω λουτρω του ὑδατος) *in the laver of water*, i. e. in baptism; because it is the outward sign of it, whereby it is visibly represented as actually taking place upon the believer. This is that one baptism which Christ has instituted to be as it were the nuptial washing of his one bride the church, for which he gave himself, and which he hath appointed to continue until his second coming.[c]—3. Lastly, this sanctification or cleansing of the church is also (εν ῥηματι) *by the word*, i. e. the word of the truth of the gospel; without which we cannot know any thing of Christ, and of the ends of his death and resurrection, or be benefited thereby.[d] It is in *understanding* and *believing* this word by the Spirit, as it testifies of Christ, that we are actually connected with him, regenerated, receive the remission of sins, and have our hearts purified.[e] It is this word which gives a *meaning* to baptism, which *pronounces* the believer clean by what is therein signified, and which furnishes him with every *motive* to holiness in heart and life. Thus we may see the import of Christ's declaration, "Now ye are clean, through the word which I have spoken unto you;"[f]

c Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. d Rom. x. 14, 15, 16. e Chap. x 8, 9. 1 Pet. i. 23. Acts xv. 7, 8, 9. f John xv. 3.

and of his prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."[g] To be sanctified *by the word* or *through the truth*, is the same as to be sanctified *by the Spirit*; for the Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of the truth*,[h] and exerts his enlightening and sanctifying influence, not separate from, but by means of the truth. Hence the same effects are ascribed sometimes to the word, and at other times to the Spirit, though both must always be understood.

Thus I have considered baptism as it represents a *washing* or *cleansing*; but that is not the only, nor indeed the principal view of this ordinance. It holds forth the believer's connection with Christ in a manner still more close, striking, and complete, than any thing included in that idea. For,

2. It exhibits the *death, burial,* and *resurrection* of Christ, whereby he fulfilled all righteousness, together with the Christian's *communion* with, and *conformity* to him therein. This the apostle expressly declares, and chiefly insists upon: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,"[i] &c. He gives the same view of it in Col. ii. 12, 13. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him

g John xvii. 17. h Chap. xv. 26. and xvi. 13, i Rom. vi. 3, 4.

from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses."—From these passages we learn,

(1.) That baptism represents Christ's *death, burial,* and *resurrection;* and so exhibits in a figure what the gospel declares by way of testimony, viz, That he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."[k] This is what was represented by his own baptism, as appears from the reason he assigns for it to John; "Suffer it to be so now; for (ἄρτω) THUS it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness;"[l] *q. d.* "Permit me to be baptized; for my baptism is a figure of the work which I have undertaken to finish; for *in like manner* as I am buried under, and raised again out of the water *even so* it becometh me to fulfil all righteousness by dying and rising again from the dead." Accordingly, this being transacted in a figure, the whole exhibition was completed when (ἀνέβη) he ascended up from the water, and the Holy Ghost descended upon him, accompanied with the Father's voice from heaven announcing him his beloved Son, and declaring his good pleasure in him;[m] which was fully verified at his resurrection from the dead,[n] and ascension to the right hand of God.[o] The mystery of Christ's baptism, therefore, appears to be this: The *water,* which is the emblem of distress, and an instrument of suffocation and death, denoted the vindictive jus-

k Rom. iv. 25. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4. l Mat. iii. 15. m Ver. 16, 17. n Rom. i. 4. o Acts ii. 33.

tice of God, or the indispensible punishment due to sin, according to the sanction of the divine law.[p]—His *immersion* under the water, signified his taking this punishment upon himself, and bearing it in his own sufferings and death, whereby he made a complete atonement, and so removed the curse.[q]—His *emersion*, or rising again out of the water, represented his resurrection from the dead, wherein he was justified or acquitted, as having fully satisfied all demands, and also obtained eternal life, dominion, and glory, as the reward of his obedience unto death.[r] Thus he came by *water* and *blood*;[s] and this is the mystery of his baptism concerning which he says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"[t] From the forecited passages we also learn,

(2.) That the baptism of believers represents their *union* and *communion with Christ* in his death, burial, and resurrection. The expressions "baptized into his death—buried with him in baptism—wherein also ye are risen with him," &c.* evidently imply, That, by a gracious divine constitution, Christ sustained the persons of all the elect in his dying and rising again; that they were so comprehended in, and accounted one with him, as to have died in his death, been buried in his burial, and raised again in

* The original compounds are exceedingly expressive on this subject; *συνταφεντες αυτω, contombed with him*; so also *αυσαυροομαι, συνεγειρομαι, συζωοποιεω*, &c.

p Psal. lxix. 1, 2. Gal. iii. 10. q Isa. liii. 5, 6, 8. 1 Pet. iii. 18. Gal. iii. 13. r Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Heb. i. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. s 1 John v. 6. t Luke xii. 50

his resurrection; and that now, upon their believing the gospel, this is signified to them by their baptism, wherein Christ's death, burial, and resurrection are reacted in a figure upon their own persons. The scripture abounds with this delightful doctrine.

As to *communion with Christ in his death*, the apostle says, "We are dead to sin—dead with Christ;"[u] viz. as having been comprehended in him when he died. In the same sense he affirms, "that our old man (συνεσταυρωθη) was crucified with him."[x] For understanding which it may be proper to notice, That by our *old man* is meant not merely our sinful inclinations and actions, for these are its lusts and deeds;[y] but it signifies the whole of our natural state which we derive from Adam, with all that pertains to it; such as—*sin*, both in its guilt whereby we are liable to condemnation, and in its indwelling power by which it has infected our whole constitution, and subjected us to its service.[z]—Our connection with the *law* as the killing letter, which demands of us perfect obedience for life, gives the knowledge of sin, and denounces the curse upon every failure;[a] the effect of which upon the carnal mind is to irritate the (παθηματα) passions of sins, excite the fear of wrath, and so increase our natural alienation from God.[b]—*Death* also belongs to this state, it being the curse threatened in the law, and the wages of sin; for the end of these things is death.[c] This is that state which is called the *old*

u Rom. vi. 2, 8. x Ver. 6. y Eph. iv. 22. Col. iii. 9. z Rom. iii. 19. and vi. 20. Eph. ii. 2. 3. a Rom. vii. 1. x. 5. and iii. 20. Gal. iii. 10. b Rom. vii. 5, 8. iv. 15. and viii. 7. c Rom. vi. 21, 23. vii. 5. and viii. 6, 13.

*man*, or the *flesh*: a state under the dominion of the condemning law, sin and death; for "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."[d] When, therefore, it is said "that our old man was crucified with him," it imports, that Christ by his death hath freed us from the *law* as the condition of life, by satisfying all its claims upon us in this respect; that he hath expiated our *sins* by bearing the punishment due to them in our stead, with a view to free us also from the indwelling power and service of sin; and consequently hath delivered us from that *death* which is the wages of sin and the curse of the law. The same doctrine is taught, 2 Cor. v. 14. "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all (ἀρα οἱ πάντες ἀπέθανον) then all have died," viz. in Christ's dying. Accordingly the Apostle says of himself,[e] "I through the law am dead to the law," i. e. *through the law* by which Christ died, or through the body of Christ slain for his sins,[f] he was *dead to the law*, so that it had no farther claim upon him for satisfaction, or in point of justification, (for "he that is dead is freed from sin,"[g]) he having already suffered its utmost penalty in the person of his Substitute when be bore the curse for him, which he terms his being *crucified with Christ*.

As to *communion with Christ in his resurrection*, the same Apostle says, "God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us TOGETHER

d 1 Cor. xv. 56. e Gal. ii. 19, 20. f Rom. vii. 4. g Chap vi. 7.

WITH CHRIST, (by grace ye are saved), and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places IN CHRIST JESUS."[h] For when Christ was discharged from the guilt of his people for whom he died, and was raised up from the dead to the enjoyment of eternal life and glory, then they also were quickened and raised up *together with him*, being included *in him* as their head. Accordingly believers are exhorted to reckon themselves thus connected with Christ both in his dying and living: "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God (ἐν) IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."[i] And this reckoning answers to what was just a little before declared to be the import of their baptism;[k] for their burial in, and rising again out of the water, exhibited what Christ underwent, not singly, but, as involving them in it, nay, as passing upon themselves, even as if they had undergone it in their own persons. Such is the intimate connection between Christ and his members in his dying and rising, and such is the reckoning which believers are called to make of their baptism; the faith which answers to the mystery of it according to the word of God. As the effect of this,

(3.) Baptism also imports the believer's *spiritual conformity to Christ in his death and resurrection*, by dying unto sin, and rising again to a new life of holiness. This is a necessary consequence of the

h Eph. ii. 4—7. i Rom. vi. 10, 11. k Rom. vi. 3, 4.

former, an essential and important branch of the salvation by Christ, and produced by a communication of his Spirit, whereby they are made to perceive, believe, and love the truth, and so to fall under its habitual and prevailing influence. It consists of two things; the *mortification* of sin, or putting off the old man with his lusts and deeds; and a *resurrection* to a new spiritual life, or putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

That immersion represents the death or mortification of sin, is clear from the passages already mentioned. The chief scope of the Apostle in Rom. vi. is to show, that believers must not "continue in sin that grace may abound;" for, says he "how shall we that are dead to sin," viz. by Christ's death, "live any longer therein," namely, in our own persons, as was the case before we knew the grace of God in truth?[l] He reminds us that our death unto sin by the death of Christ was signified by our baptism: wherein we "were immersed into his death, —buried with him," or "planted together in the likeness of his death;"[m] by which we were given to "know this, that our old man was crucified with him, (ἵνα) to the end that the body of sin might be destroyed (viz. in us), that henceforth we should not serve sin."[n] Agreeable to these principles, he, in the first place, directs Christians to reckon themselves to be dead indeed unto sin in Christ Jesus, or by his dying for sin once,[o] and then urges them

l Rom. vi. 1, 2. m Ver. 3, 4, 5. n Ver. 6. o Ver. 10, 11.

from that consideration to throw off the service of sin: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin."[p] And he encourages them in this by the advantage which their new state in Christ gave them over sin, being freed from the condemning law which gave strength to it: "For (says he) sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law but under grace."[q] The mortification of sin is also held forth as the import of baptism in Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism," &c. The "body of the sins of the flesh" is the whole frame of indwelling sin, which is both influenced by the fleshly body, and also exerts itself by means of it, using the members thereof as its instruments in fulfilling its various desires and lusts, which are wholly earthly, sensual, and devilish. To be governed by this body of sin is to be *in the flesh*, to mind the things of the flesh, and to live after the flesh;[r] and such are termed (ψυχικοι) *soulish, animal, or sensual,* in opposition to their being spiritual, or having the Spirit.[s] Now our burial in baptism represents the destruction of this body of sin, or our putting it off, as the body is put off by death; for "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,"[t] and "through

p Rom. vi. 12, 13. q Ver. 14. r Chap. viii. 5, 8, 13.
s 1 Cor. ii. 14. Jude ver. 19. t Gal. v 24.

the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body."[u] Peter also considers this as signified in baptism, and an effect of Christ's death and resurrection. He says, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust (that he might bring us to God,) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."[x] And having observed that baptism doth now save us by this,[y] he shews that the influence of Christ's death upon us must be mortification of sin, and conformity to him in his sufferings: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."[z] But as Christ's death will not have this effect unless it be published and made known, he adds, "For, for this cause also was the gospel preached to the dead," viz. in trespasses and sins, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh," i. e. mortified as to their former lusts, though they should be judged and condemned by carnal men, "but live according to God in the Spirit."[a] So Paul, speaking of the effect of Christ's cross upon himself, says, "by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world."[b] In short, baptism represents the old man to be slain, put off, and buried in such a manner as that he shall neither ever rise in judgment to our condemnation, nor any longer exercise dominion in our bodies that we should obey his lusts.

u Rom. viii. 13. x 1 Pet. iii. 18. y Ver. 20, 21, 22.
z Chap. iv. 1, 2. a Ver. 6. b Gal. vi. 14.

Our *reviviscence*, or *resurrection* to a new life of holiness, in conformity to Christ's resurrection from the dead, and by virtue derived from it, is also represented in baptism by our rising again out of the water. This view of it is likewise held forth in the forecited texts: "We are buried with him by baptism into death, (ἵνα) to the end that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."[c] Christ was raised up from the death which he suffered for our sins by the glory, i. e. by the Spirit of the Father,[d] called also the power of God,[e] his mighty power;[f] and it is the energy of that same Spirit which quickened Jesus, and dwells in him as the risen head, that begets us to the faith of him by the word, unites us to him as living members of his body, and so quickens and raises us up to a new life of conformity to him in holiness. Thus by participating of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, we are "married to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."[g] Answerable to this import of baptism, the Apostle exhorts believers to "yield themselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead; and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God."[h] In his epistle to the Colossians, having shown that they were "buried with Christ in baptism," he adds, "wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who

c Rom. vi. 4. d 1 Pet. iii. 18. e 2 Cor. xiii. 4. f Eph. i. 19. 20. g Rom. vii. 4. h Chap. vi. 13.

hath raised him from the dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."[i] This explains the nature of our spiritual resurrection with Christ in baptism; it is "through faith," or believing on God as having raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification;[k] and this faith is not of ourselves, but "of the operation of God," being produced by the same divine power "which raised Christ from the dead."* When therefore the Holy Spirit which quickened Christ, by his almighty and inexplicable energy, makes men perceive the import and evidence of the gospel testimony respecting Christ's death and resurrection, so as to *believe* it in their heart as the testimony of God, whose glory shines forth therein, then they who were dead in their sins by a legal sentence of condemnation, and also in the uncircumcision of their flesh by the dominion of the body of sin, are quickened together with him; being not only forgiven all their former trespasses, but also furnished with the principles of a new life of holiness. For

* "The operation of God" is here mentioned either as the productive cause of *faith* itself, according to Eph. ii. 8. or of *Christ's resurrection*, as in chap. i. 19, 20. which is the object of faith, Rom. x. 9. I have taken in both senses; and in either view it proves to a demonstration, that none are benefited by baptism, or raised with Christ therein, but such as have the faith of the operation of God which raised Christ; nor can they have any visible right to that ordinance till they profess this faith.

i Col. ii. 12, 13. k Rom. iv. 24, 25.

such is the nature of the gospel testimony, that if we believe it, it must produce in our minds *peace* with God, *joy* in him, and the *hope* of his glory:[l] and this must be attended with *love* to him for his great love therein commended towards sinners.[m] And as the life which we now begin to live in the flesh is not by our own righteousness, but by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us;[n] so this love of Christ will constrain us to live unto him, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all have died; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again."[o] Such motives prevailing in our minds through the power of the Holy Spirit, and exciting our supreme affection and joyful hope, must necessarily influence us to live no longer the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God;[p] whilst, at the same time, we will often find it needful, in this imperfect state, to attend to the cautions of the same Spirit, not to be "high-minded but fear;"[q] and that "if we live after the flesh we shall die."[r] The apostle says to the believing Galatians, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."[s] Baptism represented their putting on Christ as their righteousness, in whom they have acceptance, the adoption of children, and a title to the inheritance, and, in consequence of this, their putting on con-

l Rom. v. 1, 2, 11. m Ver. 8. 1 John iv. 19. n Gal. ii. 20. o 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. p 1 Pet. iv. 2. q Rom. xi. 20, 21. r Chap. viii. 13. s Gal. iii. 27.

formity to him in his holy character and life; and so the phrase "putting on the Lord Jesus Christ" is opposed to "making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof;"[t] and it is equivalent to our putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." This is that spiritual resurrection which is represented in baptism, wherein believers are risen with Christ through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead, that like as he was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so they also should walk in newness of life. And in reference to this, the Apostle exhorts the believing Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Chirst sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." This he enforces by motives drawn both from their present state and future glory; "For ye are dead," viz. to the law, sin, and the world, by communion with Christ in his death; "and your life," to which ye are risen with Christ, and enjoy at present by faith and hope, "is hid with Christ in God." But "when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."[u]

(4.) Lastly, Baptism ultimately signifies the death of this mortal body, and our resurrection from the dead to inherit eternal life; which is our complete conformity to Christ, who was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

t Rom. xiii. 14. u Col. iii. 1—5. x 1 Pet. iii. 18.

As to the death of the body; it has been already observed, that immersion represents a death and burial, which imports an entire extinction of life, and so signifies, not a partial, but total destruction of the body of sin;[y] and that not merely as to its reigning power over us, but as to its very being and existence in us. It represents our putting it off, as we put off this earthly tabernacle by death.[z] Now this will never be fully accomplished until we actually put off the body itself, in which it remains as a law in the members warring against the law of the mind:[a] for while believers are in this life, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that they cannot do the things that they would."[b] Though our old man was crucified with Christ in his death, as to his power to condemn;[c] and though believers, through the Spririt of Christ dwelling in them, have already put him off in respect of his dominion and rule;[d] yet the remains of him still lurks and stirs in their flesh; so that while they are in the body they have always need to be exhorted to "put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."[e] Paul, during the whole course of his Christian race and warfare, had to keep under his body, and bring it into subjection,[f] and did not expect a complete freedom from the law in his members till he should be delivered from the body itself; and

y Rom. vi. 6. z Col. ii. 11. with 2 Pet. i. 14. a Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23. b Gal. v. 17. c Rom. vi. 6. d Col. iii. 9, 10. e Eph. iv. 22. f 1 Cor. ix. 27.

therefore exclaims, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" i. e. from this mortal body.[g] He considered sin so inveterately rooted in his flesh, that, like the fretting leprosy under the law,[h] it could never be entirely eradicated till the earthly house of this tabernacle was pulled down; and for this, as for other reasons, he groans, being burdened, to be absent from the body.[i] As, therefore, immersion signifies the entire destruction of indwelling sin, it must refer ultimately to the death of the mortal body, when the following words shall be verified not only in their spiritual, but full and literal sense, "He that is dead is freed from sin,"[k] "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin."[l] Christ's immersion in Jordan was a figure of his being put to death in the flesh, as well as of his being quickened by the Spirit, in allusion to which he terms his death a baptism;[m] and as he informs Nicodemus, that a man must be born of water in order to his entering the kingdom of God,[n] so he also intimates to his disciples, that they must undergo the baptism of death before they can enjoy the honours and happiness of his heavenly kingdom;[o] for flesh and blood cannot inherit it.[p] Though believers are already justified through faith in the blood of Christ, and quickened to a new spiritual life by his Spirit dwelling in them; yet still "the body is dead because of sin,"[q]

g Rom. vii. 24. h Lev. xiv. 44, 45. i 2 Cor. v. 1---9. k Rom. vi. 7. l 1 Pet. iv. 1. m Luke xii. 50. n John iii. 5. o Mat. xx. 22, 23. p 1 Cor. xv. 50. q Rom. viii. 11.

it being under the sentence of death denounced upon the transgression of Adam.[r] The redemption by Christ does not prevent the execution of this original sentence upon the body, but converts it into a benefit;[s] for hereby they are entirely freed from all their remaining connection with, and conformity to the first man, in order to their being completely conformed to the second.[t]

That baptism also signifies the resurrection of the saints from the dead to inherit eternal life with Christ, is plain from 1 Cor. xv. 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" Some among the Corinthians denied the resurrection of the dead.[u] This error, the Apostle shows, subverted the whole gospel which he had preached unto them;[x] implied that Christ himself was not risen, consequently, that they were yet in their sins; and that they who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.[y] In the words above quoted, he intimates, that by denying the resurrection they set aside the crowning design of their baptism, and rendered it of no consequence, making it merely a baptism *for the dead*; i. e. for, or in the name of Christ, considered only in the state of the dead, without any reference to his having risen as the first fruits of them that slept, or to their own resurrection in consequence thereof; * whereas baptism repre-

* This seems to be the meaning of "baptized (ὑπερ των νεκρων) "*for the dead.*" But whatever be the precise sense of that expression, the

r Gen. iii. 19. Rom. v. 12. s 1 Cor. iii. 22. Rev. xiv. 13. t 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49. u 1 Cor. xv. 12. x Ver. 1--12. y Ver. 13--19.

sents not only Christ's death and burial, but also his rising again from the dead, and our resurrection by him. It has been already observed, that baptism is the sign of regeneration, as that word is commonly taken for conversion or the new birth, according to John iii. 3, 5. But the scripture sense of the word (παλιγγενεσια) REGENERATION is more comprehensive. It occurs but in two places of the New Testament: in one of which it evidently signifies the resurrection of the just, or the restitution of all things. Thus when Peter said to Christ, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, what shall we have therefore? Jesus said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that ye who have followed me*, in the REGENERATION when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[z] *q. d.* Ye who have forsaken all and followed me in this world, shall, in the regeneration, or at the resurrection, sit upon twelve thrones, &c. for that is the time when they shall be recompensed.[a] The resurrection is a regeneration in the most proper sense, and is that to which our baptism and

scope of the passage, and the questions, "What shall they do who are baptized, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized?" evidently show, that the Apostle considered baptism as a pledge of the resurrection, and was at a loss to assign any meaning or end to it upon supposition that the dead rise not at all.

* By inserting a comma after the words *followed me*, as is done in a great many Greek and other copies, *regeneration* will refer to the time "when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory," and the sense appear at once.

z Mat. xix. 27, 28. a Luke xiv. 14.

spiritual regeneration ultimately refer; for "he saves us by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost—(ινα) to the end that we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."[b] Though believers are now the adopted sons of God,[c] and regenerated of the incorruptible seed of the word by the Spirit,[d] yet still they are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their body,"[e] when they shall be regenerated from death, in conformity to Christ the first-begotten of the dead,[f] and be the children of God as the children of the resurrection,[g] having the body of their humiliation changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.[h]—The Apostle, distinguishing the present from the resurrection body, says,[i] "There is an animal * (or soulish) body, and there is a spiritual body," i. e. a body refined from every gross and corruptible quality, and quickened by the Holy Spirit; and he gives Adam as the pattern and original of the former, and Christ of the latter: "And so it is written,[k] The first man Adam was made (εγενετο *became*) a living soul;"† his body, formed

* Not φυσικον, *natural*, but ψυχικον, *soulish, animal*, or *sensitive*; hence the mere sons of Adam, with their highest endowments, whether natural or acquired, are termed (ψυχικοι) *sensual* or *animal*, as not having the Spirit of Christ, Jude, ver. 9. and so the same word should also be rendered in 1 Cor. ii. 14. and in ver. 44, 46, of this chapter.

† ψυχη, *soul*, here, is his proof for the (σωμα ψυχικον) *soulish* or *animal body* mentioned above; and is opposed to the (πνευμα) *Spirit* which is the quickening principle of the (σωμα πνευματικον) *spiritual body*.

b Tit. iii. 5, 6, 7. c 1 John iii. 2. d 1 Pet. i. 23. John iii. 5. e Rom. viii. 23. f Rev. i. 5. g Luke xx. 36. h Philip. iii. 21. i 1 Cor. xv. 44, 45. k Gen. ii. 7

of the dust, being quickened by the breath of God (εις) into an animal sensitive frame, fitted for the functions, and enjoyments of the earthly life. This was the quickening of all his posterity in their root, the original of that life which animates them for a season, but is now loaded with much trouble, and forfeited by his transgression.[l] But "the last Adam was made (or became *) a quickening Spirit; being not only quickened by the Spirit[m] to a heavenly and immortal life from the dead,[n] but also possessing this life in himself to quicken whom he will.[o] Thus he is the beginning of the new creation of God,[p] the source of a life infinitely transcending that which was forfeited even in its best estate. This Spirit of life which is in Jesus the risen head, he communicates to all his members to quicken them to a spiritual life of conformity to him in this world, and it is in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life;[q] being not only the first fruits and earnest of it,[r] but the very living principle that shall quicken their mortal bodies at the last day, and fully conform them to the image of the heavenly man.[s] With this agrees what the Apostle says to the Romans in chap. viii. 9, 10, 11.

* This supplement agrees better with εγενετο in the former clause. Adam, by the breath of life breathed into him, *became* a living soul, and the source of natural life to his posterity: Christ being quickened from death by the Spirit, *became* the source of a spiritual, heavenly, and eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him, John xiv. 19. and xvii. 2.

l Gen. iii. 17---20. m 1 Pet. iii. 18. n Rom. vi. 9 o John v. 21, 26. 2 Cor. iv. 14. p Rev. i. 5. with iii. 14. q John iv. 14. r Rom. viii. 23. Eph. i. 14. s 1 Cor. xv. 49.

' But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. And (δε) if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Christ is represented as the Bridegroom of his church, whom he loved and purchased by giving himself for her, having cleansed in the laver of water by the word. It has already been shown that baptism is here referred to, and it is considered under the notion of a nuptial washing or purification,[t] in the view of her being presented to her husband, or, " that he may present her to himself, a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."[u] This must ultimately refer to the time of Christ's second coming, when the whole chosen company whom he hath washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, redeemed from the grave, and presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.[x] For then, in the fullest sense, shall the marriage of the Lamb be come, when his espoused wife, having made herself ready, shall be presented unto him prepared as

t See Esth. ii. 8, 9. u Eph. v. 25, 26, 27. x Jude ver 24

a bride adorned for her husband,[y] a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, but perfectly free from all sin, blemish, or deformity of every kind. Then shall the royal nuptials be celebrated with never-ending gladness, and the blessedness of the saints be complete in being ever with the Lord, beholding his glory, in being made like unto him, and in partaking with him in the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.[z]

Thus I have endeavoured to set forth the import or signification of baptism; and from the various passages of Scripture where it is mentioned, we have seen, That it is the sign of spiritual *regeneration*, or the new birth, without which we cannot enter into the kingdom of God;—of the *washing away of sin*, both as to its guilt and pollution, or of justification and sanctification; and especially that it represents the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Christ as the ground of hope—the believer's *union* and *communion* with him therein—his *spiritual conformity* to him, in dying unto sin and rising to a new life of holiness—and his full and *complete conformity* to him in the death of his mortal body, and in his resurrection to a heavenly and immortal life from the dead. So that this divine ordinance is pregnant with the richest meaning, and is wisely and graciously appointed as a means for strengthening the faith, confirming the hopes, exciting the love, and promoting the holiness and consolation

y Rev. xix 7, 8, 9, and xxi. 2. Psal. xvi. 11.

z John xvii. 24. 1 John iii. 2.

of believers, for whom only it is intended, and who alone can reap any benefit from it.

I have dwelt rather too long upon this head; but I imagine the importance of the subject, and the general inattention paid to it, will plead my excuse.

## PART III.

### THE COMMANDMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS OF CHRIST, WHICH THE APOSTLES TAUGHT BELIEVERS TO OBSERVE.

*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*

THE teaching here enjoined differs from that mentioned in the preceding verse, and so is no tautology. It is not only expressed in the original by another word (διδασκοντες), but is distinguished from it in several other respects.

The first teaching has for its object *all nations;* but the object of this is *baptized disciples* gathered out of the nations.—The subject of the former is the *gospel,*[a] or glad tidings of salvation; but the subject of the latter is *all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded,* i. e. his laws and institutions.—The design of the first is to *make disciples,* or proselyte unbelievers to the faith of Christ; but the design of the last is to instruct disciples (τηρειν) *to observe,* keep, or obey, his commandments.—By the former, men are to be taught what to *believe;* by the latter, what to *practise* in consequence of believing.

The apostles strictly followed the order in which the different parts of the commission are arranged; for that order is not arbitrary or accidental, but

a Mark xvi. 15.

founded in the very nature of things. Though they called all men every where to faith and repentance;[b] yet they never imagined that any could truly obey the sayings of Christ till once they believed the gospel, and had their minds furnished with proper principles. As they made no account of that obedience which does not spring from love, a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;[c] so all their practical instructions are addressed to *professed disciples,* and enforced by arguments and motives drawn from the principles of the gospel which such are supposed already to believe. They did not urge the peculiar precepts of the gospel even upon disciples till they were baptized; for baptism itself was the very first ordinance which they called believers to observe, whereby they initiated them into the obedience of the rest, and from which they drew arguments for their walking in newness of life.[d]

The words, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," import, 1. That the apostles were to make no addition to his commands. They were not to make laws of their own, and impose them upon the disciples, nor to teach them the doctrines and commandments of men;[e] but *only* to teach what Christ had commanded them, or should afterwards reveal unto them by his Spirit, which last are also to be acknowledged as the commandments of the Lord.[f] 2. The words also clearly import, That they were to keep back

b Acts xx. 21. and xxvi. 20 c 1 Tim. i. 5. Heb. xi. 6.
d Rom. vi. Col. ii. 11---14. and iii. 1, &c. e Mat. xv. 9 Col. ii. 8, 20, 21, 22 f 1 Cor. xiv. 37.

nothing which he had commissioned them to teach; but to instruct the disciples to observe *all things* whatsoever he had commanded, without exception; not holding any of his precepts as a matter of indifference, or dispensing with the least of them.[g]

I do not here propose to give a full detail of all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded; but only to mention some leading particulars, which include others, and notice the general spirit of the whole.

### *Of the Law of Creation, or eternal rule of Righteousness, commonly called* THE MORAL LAW.

CHRIST hath adopted the eternal rule of righteousness, or moral law, as the law of his kingdom; and delivered it to his disciples to be the rule of their obedience and conformity to him, and that in a suitableness to the more perfect state of things under the new covenant.

This law is not like positive or temporary institutions, which depend entirely upon the will of the Institutor; but is founded on the very nature of God, being a transcript of his holiness, justice, and goodness;—on our relation to him as his creatures, and the subjects of his moral government:—and on our relation to one another, as possessed of the same common nature, and connected by various ties. It stands upon the immutable and essential distinction between moral good and evil, right and

g Mat. v. 19. James ii. 10, 11

wrong; and so, for substance, must remain the same under every dispensation.

The principle or spirit of this law is perfect love to-God and our neighbour. Our Lord sums it up thus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."[h] As God is possessed of every perfection and excellency in himself, and is the author and end of our being, and the source of all happiness; so the first and great commandment of the law requires, that we should love him in the first place, with a supreme, perfect, and undivided affection, possessing our whole heart, soul, and mind; and therefore this love is not compared with that which we owe to ourselves or to fellow-creatures. But the second command of the law, "Thou shall love thy neighbour AS THYSELF," makes the love of ourselves the rule and measure of our love to others. Upon this principle our Lord establishes a plain and comprehensive rule to direct us in the practical exercise of love to our neighbour; "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."[i] Love is the end of the commandment,[k] the fulfilling of the law; and the different precepts are just so many directions to the proper and practical exercise of

h Mat. xxii. 37---41. i Mat. vii. 12. k 1 Tim. i. 5.

love:[l] so that "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all;"[m] for, in that instance, he violates the common principle which pervades the whole, namely, love.

As Adam was originally made upright,[n] and created after the image of God,[o] he must have had this law written on his heart as the law of creation, answerable to the manifestation he had of God in the paradisaical state.

Notwithstanding the fall, there are still traces of this law remaining in the conscience of every man sufficient to constitute him a sinner, render him inexcusable, and condemn him: and from these natural notices of God and his law, the apostle convinceth the heathen of sin.[p]

When God separated the fleshly seed of Abraham from the nations, redeemed them out of Egypt, and entered into a covenant with them at Sinai, he delivered them this law as the very words of that covenant,[q] and wrote it with his own finger in ten commandments upon two tables of stone.[r] But here the apostle distinguishes the law into *flesh* or letter, and *spirit*.—1. As it stood in that peculiar covenant, it was suited to the manifestation which God made of himself to that earthly nation as their God who had redeemed them out of Egypt.[s] It bound them to observe all the statutes and judgments, ceremonial and judicial, contained in the book of the Mosaic law; for these were the expli-

l Rom. xiii. 8---11. Gal. v. 14. James ii. 8, 9. m James ii. 10, 11.
n Eccl. vii. 29. o Gen. i. 26, 27. p Rom. i. 20, 32. and ii. 14, 15.
q Exod. xx. r Chap. xxx. 18. s Chap. xx. 2.

cation at large of the ten precepts of the covenant, as applied and adapted to the peculiar state of that people; so that in breaking any of these, they transgressed the law written on the tables. Thus it was the rule of their national righteousness, according to which they enjoyed the good things of the earthly inheritance;[t] and it was sanctioned by temporal rewards and punishments, suited to that worldly establishment,[u] wherein God stood related to them as their political Sovereign. This was the *letter* of the law; and touching the righteousness which is in it, the Apostle says he was blameless.[x]—2. But when we consider this law as requiring perfect love to God and our neighbour,[y] forbidding every lust and irregular motion of the heart,[z] promising eternal life upon condition of perfect obedience,[a] and denouncing the curse of God upon every the least failure;[b] it is evident, that neither Old Israel, nor any of the sinful race of Adam, could ever personally stand in covenant with God, or obtain eternal life upon such terms.[c] And so the Apostle, who had been blameless as to the outward righteousness of the letter, found himself condemned by the precept against covetousness, which led him to see the spiritual extent of the rest.[d] The law in this sense, therefore, was given to convince of sin and its demerit,[e] and with a view to the promised Seed, who

t Deut. v. 31, 32, 33. u Chap. xxviii. x Philip. iii. 6. y Deut. vi. 5. Lev. xix. 18. z Exod. xx. 17. a Rom. ii. 13. and x. 5. Mat. xix. 16---22. Luke x. 28. b Gal. iii. 10. c Psal. cxxx. 3. Eccl. vii. 20. Rom. iii. 9--23. d Rom. vii. 7---14. e Rom. iii. 20. and v. 20. Gal. iii. 19.

was to come of that people, to be made under this law, fulfil it, and bear its curse for his guilty people of all nations,[f] and thus obtain for them the remission of sins, and the eternal inheritance.[g] This, with the law written on the hearts of the true Israel,[h] is the *spirit* of that law which was delivered to Israel according to the flesh, in the peculiar covenant made with them at Sinai.

Accordingly, when Jesus began his public ministry as the great Prophet and Lawgiver of his church, he said to his disciples, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."[a] He came to fulfil all the types of the ceremonial law, and to accomplish all the predictions in the writings of Moses and the prophets respecting himself, so that not the least iota or tittle of them was to pass away till all was completely accomplished in him. He also came to satisfy all the demands of the moral law upon his guilty people by his own most perfect obedience unto death,[i] whereby he hath freed them from that law in respect of its *curse*, and as it is the *condition* of their acceptance to life; not by abolishing it in these respects, but by fulfilling it in their stead,[k] and so becoming the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.[l]

f Psal. xl. 6---9. Gal. iv. 4, 5. and iii. 13, 14. g Rom. v. 19. Gal. iii. 16---24. Heb ix. 15. h 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. viii. 10. a Mat. v. 17. i Gal. iv. 4. 5. Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. k Gal. iii. 13. Rom. v. 19. l Rom. x. 4.

At his baptism he professed his undertaking to fulfil all righteousness, and that ordinance was a figure of the manner in which he was to do so, namely, by his death and resurrection from the dead.[m] Thus the law stands eternally honoured and magnified by the obedience of the Son of God, in which Jehovah declares himself well pleased.[n]

But as the holy law of God is the unalterable standard of righteousness and true holiness; as without holiness no man shall see the Lord, or, in the very nature of things, be capable of enjoying him;[o] as sin is the transgression of the law, and as Christ was manifested to take away our sins, and to save us from the power as well as guilt and punishment of them,[p]—so our Lord's words may probably import, that he came not (καταλυσαι) *to dissolve* the moral law as a rule of life, or to relax the standard of holiness, as the Jewish doctors did by their corrupt glosses and traditions; but (πληρωσαι) *to fill up*, or *explain it fully* * in its highest sense, and deliver

* The word πληρω is frequently translated *to fill*, or *fill up*, as in Mat. xxiii. 32. Eph. iv. 10. 1 Thess. ii. 16. John xvi. 6. Acts ii. 2. and sometimes *to preach fully*, Rom. xv. 19. Col. i. 25. marg. In this passage it refers both to the law and the prophets. As it relates to prophecies, types or promises, it signifies *to fulfil* or *accomplish* them; but so far as it refers to the moral law, which is the main subject of this discourse, it must signify either to *do it fully*, or to *teach it fully*. Our Lord mentions both *doing* and *teaching*, ver 19. and it is certain he himself did both; but as he taught as one having authority, chap. vii. 29. or as the great Prophet and Lawgiver of his church, it is natural to understand

m Mat. iii. 15 Rom. vi. 3, 4. n Isa. xlii. 21. o Heb. xii. 14. p 1 John iii. 4, 5. Tit. ii. 12---15.

it to his followers as the rule of their obedience and conformity to him: At least this sense agrees well with the design of that admirable discourse, and affords a clear reason for what he says, ver 19. "Whosoever, THEREFORE, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[q] Here the moral law is established by the authority of the Lord Redeemer as the law of his kingdom, and none of the least of its precepts is permitted to be broken; and so we find his apostles, through the whole of their writings, teaching the disciples to observe this law, both in its general principle and particular precepts.[r] James terms it the *royal law*, the *perfect law of liberty*, and exhorts Christians so to speak and do, as they that shall be judged by it.[s]

In the new covenant, this law is given in a more excellent manner than ever it was before, either to Adam in Paradise or to Israel at Sinai; being delivered by Christ to his redeemed people under the

πληρωσαι in this place as more immediately expressive of his work in the capacity of a teacher or legislator; for it is opposed to his authoritatively *dissolving* or abrogating the law.

q Mat. v. 19, 20.
r Rom. xiii. 8---11. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 14. 1 Tim. i. 5---12.
s James i. 25. and ii. 8---13.

covert of his own blood, as was prefigured by sprinkling the book of the law in the first covenant with the blood of the sacrifices:[t]—written not on tables of stones, but by the Spirit of the living God on the hearts of his subjects;[u]—recommended by the endearing example of Christ himself;[x]—enforced by his redeeming love, and the rewards and punishments of a future state.[y] In this covenant it is a *law of liberty*, no more binding them under the curse,[z] keeping them in bondage through fear of death,[a] or irritating the passions of sin;[b] but suited to their state of liberty, as the children of God made free by the Son,[c] and influenced by the free-moving principle of love to keep his commandments.[d]

Under the gospel, the rule of duty is carried to a higher degree of spirituality and perfection than in any former revelation of the mind of God. It is accommodated to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world; and so contains a perfect system of non-conformity to the world, enjoining mortification, self-denial, and crucifixion to it in all its lusts and favourite pursuits.[e] It is suited to the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, considered in the situation of strangers and pilgrims on the earth as Christ was, and, like him, sustaining the opposition and hatred of the world; answerable to which, it enjoins poorness of spirit, humility, meekness, patience,

t Heb. ix 19, 20, 23. u 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. viii. 10. x Mat. xi. 29. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. y John xv. 9, 10. Mat. v. 3, 10, 12, 29, 30. Rom. vi. 16, 22, 23. z Rom. viii. 1. a Rom. viii. 15. Heb. ii. 15. b Rom. vii. 5, 6. c Gal. v. 1. John viii. 31---37. d 2 Cor. v. 14. 1 John v. 2, 3. e 1 John ii 15, 16.

non-resistance of evil, forgiveness of injuries, love of enemies, &c. its great and leading design being their conformity to Christ in this world, that they may share with him in his glory when he appears.[f] Our Lord says to his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[g] The Scribes and Pharisees were the strictest sect among the Jews; yet their righteousness at best was but the righteousness of the outward letter of the law, as adapted to that earthly nation; but the righteousness which Christ requires of his disciples is conformity to the spirit of it, as explained by his sayings and exemplified in his life. To illustrate this, we shall collect some of his sayings from his discourse to his disciples on the mount and elsewhere, which are but too little attended to by many of those who profess his name.

1. "Ye have heard that it was said (τοις αρχαιοις) to the people of old, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment;* and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council;* but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire."[h]

* By the *judgment* and *council* he alludes to the courts of judicature among the Jews as a figure of eternal judgment.

f John xii. 25, 26. Rom. viii. 17, 18. 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13.
g Mat. v. 20. h Chap. v. 21---23.

The law prohibited actual murder, or taking away life, under pain of death, to be inflicted by the judges:[i] but here our Lord shows, that all causeless anger, and words expressive of contempt and hatred of a brother, make a man liable to the judgment of God as a murderer. The Apostle John teacheth the same doctrine, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."[k] Jesus supposeth that his disciples may find themselves coming short of the perfection of this precept; and therefore adds, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar,* and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."[l] Hereby he teacheth his disciples, that if they harbour any ill-will against their brother, or have given him any just cause of offence, they can have no access to God; he will not accept their services, nor hear their prayers, until they repent and give satisfaction to their injured brother. This he urges as the first thing to be done, and that without delay, lest Divine justice should take hold of them.[m]

2. "Ye have heard that it was said to the people of old, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to

* By the *gift* and the *altar* he alludes to the Jewish manner of worship.

i Exod. xx. 13. and xxi. 12---15. k 1 John iii. 15.
l Mat. v. 23, 24. m Chap. v. 25, 26.

lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."[n]

The letter of this precept forbids all outward acts of uncleanness;[o] but here our Lord shows, that every impure thought, or unchaste desire, is the commission of adultery in the sight of God. And as he knew that this and other fleshly lusts would still war in the members of his people, he urges them to subdue and mortify them, whatever uneasiness it might occasion, and that as they would avoid the fire of hell. "And if thy right eye offend thee,* pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."[p] The same thing is inculcated by his apostles: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections, evil concupiscence, &c. for which things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."[q] "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."[r] Upon this head our Lord forbids all divorces among his disciples, except for the

* Gr. *Scandalize thee*, i. e. cause thee to sin, stumble, or fall. See Chap. xviii. 6---10.

n Mat. v. 27, 28 o Exod. xx. 14. p Mat. v. 29, 30.
q Col. iii. 5, 6. r 1 Pet. ii. 11.

cause of fornication,* as being the occasion of adultery.[s]

3. "Again, ye have heard that it hath been said to the people of old, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King; neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be Yea, yea, Nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."[t]

The law given to Israel forbad the taking of God's name in vain by swearing or vowing falsely.[u] The Scribes and Pharisees taught, that men did not break this commandment if they only swore by heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar, their head, &c.[x] But Jesus prohibits all manner of swearing, whether true or false, by any kind of oath whatever, in common conversation, as a taking the name of God in vain; and enjoins that the communication of his disciples should be only by simple affirmations or

* It is my opinion, that our Lord here, and in chap. xix. 9. speaks of equal marriages. Paul refers the Corinthians to our Lord's words when treating of the same subject, 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11. but in the case of unequal marriages, i. e. believers with unbelievers (of which our Lord had said nothing, ver. 12.) the Apostle shows, that not only *fornication*, but also the obstinate and irreclaimable *desertion* of the unbelieving party, sets the believer at liberty, ver. 15.

s Mat. v. 31, 32. Lev. xix. 12. Deut. xxiii. 21---24.
t Mat. v. 33---38.
u Exod. xx. 7.
x Mat. xxiii. 16---23.

denials, because whatever exceeds these is of evil, or (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ) of the evil one. The Apostle James strongly inculcates this saying of Christ: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation."[y]

4. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away."[z]

By the law of Moses injuries were to be punished in kind by the judges, in case the injured party insisted for it;[a] so that if a man, for instance, lost an eye or tooth by a blow, he might demand the eye or tooth of the offender.* This law was suited to a nation of this world, and intended to deter lawless men from the commission of such injuries, and also to prevent the more dreadful effects of private revenge. But Christ admits of no such law in his

* The Hebrew canons admitted of a compensation in money or goods for hurts, blemishes, or loss of members. See *Ainsworth* on Lev. xxiv. 19, 20.

y James v. 12. z Mat. v. 38---43. a Exod. xxi. 24, 25. Lev. xxiv. 20. Deut. xix. 21.

kingdom, it being entirely incompatible with the genius of his religion; and therefore he absolutely forbids his subjects to resist evil, or retaliate injuries, in any manner of way whatever.

The heart of man naturally rebels against this prohibition; and various have been the attempts to explain it away by a number of distinctions and exceptions, all tending to make way for the keenest resentments in what is called a *lawful way*. Many strict professors would reckon it perfectly ridiculous to understand our Lord as he speaks, and are ready to demonstrate, that the conduct here enjoined would be productive of the worst consequences to society. Yet the history of all ages will testify, that mankind have never suffered so much by patience, meekness, and non-resistance, as by their opposites. The peculiar laws of Christ, however, were not made for worldly societies, but for his disciples as distinguished from the world, and bearing its hatred; nor can they be interpreted by their conduciveness to worldly ease, honour, or advantage, for these are not their objects. Our Lord's words here are best explained by his own example, which is set before his disciples for their imitation: "But if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God: For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him

that judgeth righteously."[b] As this is so contrary to corrupt nature, it is repeatedly pressed upon the disciples: "Recompense to no man evil for evil."[c] —"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."[d]—"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."[e]—"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."[f]

This prohibition respects not only private revenge taken at our own hand, but also avenging ourselves at law under colour of public justice; for such was the demand of an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. If a disciple, for instance, is tricked of his coat at law, though he may represent the injury, yet he is forbid to retaliate it in that or in any other way, or even to enter into a contentious law-suit for the recovery of his property; but rather be disposed to yield his cloak also. Paul blames the believing Corinthians for going to law one with another, instead of referring their differences to their brethren, and asks, "Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"[g] As to himself, when falsely accused, and treated injuriously in his person under colour of law, though he made his defence, and pleaded his privilege as a

b 1 Pet. ii. 20---24. c Rom. xii. 17. d 1 Thess. v. 15.
e 1 Pet. iii. 9. f Rom. xii. 19. g 1 Cor. vi. 7.

Roman citizen;[h] yet in no instance did he seek to avenge himself by suing for retribution. Like his Master, he committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously, to whom alone vengeance belongs, and who hath promised to redress the wrongs of his people.

This precept also requires, that Christians should be of a yielding disposition in things indifferent; and rather comply even with the unreasonable demands of others, when they can do it without sin, than quarrel with them, or resist by force, ver. 41.

5. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses: But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your trespasses."[i] Again, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."[k]

In Mark's gospel, this precept of forgiveness comes in upon an exhortation to faith in prayer: "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." And in this connection it imports, that we cannot exercise this faith, or expect the answer of our prayers, if we do not forgive those who trespass against us. In Matthew it stands connected with the form of prayer which he taught his disciples, and refers particularly to the fifth petition of it, viz.

h Acts xvi. 37. chap. xxii. xxiii. xxiv. xxv. xxvi.
i Mark xi. 25, 26. k Mat. vi. 14, 15.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." He had before forbid them to offer their gift unto God while they remembered that their brother had ought against them, for which they had not given him satisfaction;[l] and here, if, on the other hand, they have ought against any which they do not heartily forgive, he assures them that God will not grant their petition for pardon to themselves. Indeed he hath so framed that petition, as to cut out any expectation of Divine forgiveness from the person who uses it, while he is conscious that he is not disposed to forgive others. In the mouth of such a person it turns into a request that he may not be forgiven; for it is a prayer that God may forgive us our debts, AS WE FORGIVE our debtors.

Though men are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whenever they believe the gospel, having the remission of sins that are past,[m] or being purged from their old sins;[n] yet they are daily sinning and coming short of the perfect rule.[o] Our Lord supposes this, and therefore directs them to pray daily for forgiveness, even as for their daily bread. For this continued pardon there is abundant provision made in the new covenant. Jesus is the propitiation, whose blood cleanseth from all sin;[p] he is also the High-priest and Advocate with the Father, making continual intercession for his people;[q] and a throne of grace is established in heaven, to which they have free access through him, that they may obtain mercy, and find

l Mat. v. 23, 24. m Rom. iii. 24, 25. n 2 Pet. i. 9. o James iii. 2. 1 John i. 8. p 1 John i. 7. and ii. 2. q Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.

grace to help in time of need;[r] so that if they confess their sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins, and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.[s] But as they do not obtain this forgiveness without confession and repentance; so neither have they ground to expect it, unless they forgive those who trespass against them. Our Lord illustrates this subject by a parable of a certain king who freely forgave his insolvent servant the enormous debt of ten thousand talents; but that servant, instead of being moved by his lord's compassion towards himself, takes his fellow-servant by the throat, who owed him the small sum of an hundred pence, and, regardless of all his intreaties, cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. When his lord was informed of this, he called him and said, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." The application is this, "So shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[t]

But there is a difference between our forgiving an unbeliever and a Christian brother. Though the first should not repent, or make any acknowledgement of his offence, we must forgive him, i. e. we must harbour no resentment against him; but, on the con-

r Heb. iv. 16. s 1 John i 9. t Mat. xvii. 23--35.

trary, bear him sincere good-will, do him all the good that lies in our power, and wish him repentance and forgiveness of God. But this is not all that is incumbent upon us in forgiving a brother: we must also restore to him our complacential love or charity for the truth's sake which dwelleth in him, which cannot take place till he confess his fault; and so our Lord makes this forgiveness to proceed upon the offender's profession of repentance.[u]

6. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."[x]

The sum of the second table of the law is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[y] The Scribes and Pharisees seem to have explained the word, *neighbour* by the phrase *the children of thy people*,[z] restricting it to those of their own country, kindred, or religion, and considered it as implying a command to hate their enemies; and by this partial and limited view of the law they endeavoured to justify themselves. But our Lord, in the parable of the good Samaritan, shows, that the word *neighbour* must be understood in an universal sense:[a] and, in this place, he not only forbids his disciples to hate any one, but

u Mat. xviii 15---18. Luke xvii. 3, 4. x Mat. v. 43---46.
y Rom xiii 8, 9. z Lev. xviii. 19. a Luke x. 25---38.

positively commands them to love even their most malicious enemies. Not indeed with a love of complacency or delight in their character or conduct, for this would be to approve of their wickedness, and is inconsistent either with the love of God or of ourselves; but with a love of benevolence, or good-will to their persons, as appears from the various expressions of it condescended on:--"Bless them that curse you." This is sincerely to wish them all true happiness: so the Apostle exhorts, "Bless them who persecute you; bless, and curse not."[b]—"Do good to them that hate you." We are not to rest satisfied in mere good wishes, however sincere; but also to exert ourselves in acts of beneficence and kindness towards them, according to their need and our ability: "Therefore," says the Apostle, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."[c]—"And pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you." We are not only to return them blessing for cursing, and good offices for evil; but to have such a real concern for the salvation of their souls, as will lead us to put up our sincere and fervent requests for them at the throne of grace; and that whilst they are insulting, maltreating, and persecuting us. This is not a strained interpretation of our Lord's words; but is confirmed by his own example, who prayed for his enemies when they had nailed him to the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."[d] Stephen imitated the example of his divine Master;

b Rom xii. 14. c Ver. 20. d Luke xxiii. 34.

and while his murderers were stoning him to death, he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."[e] The same spirit breathed in the apostles under all the despiteful usage they met with.[f]

Few of those who bear the Christian name will admit this and the two foregoing precepts even so much as in principle, and fewer still make any conscience of obeying them, though essential to the character of disciples. The greater part would ascribe the conduct here recommended to a mean, cowardly, pusillanimous disposition, or, in the modern phrase, to want of spirit; because they love not the character of Jesus, nor savour the things that be of God; whereas patiently bearing insults, forgiving injuries, and loving enemies, discovers the most exalted generosity, greatness, and fortitude of soul, that can possibly be exhibited in human nature. When the wrongs received from our enemies kindle our resentment, extinguish our benevolence, or induce us to retaliate, they have conquered us, we are then overcome of evil: but if we freely and heartily forgive them, and return them blessing for cursing, good for evil, and love for hatred, this is to overcome evil with good;[g] which is a conquest infinitely more noble, honourable, and glorious, than all the victories of Alexander and Cæsar, those scourges of mankind, who were themselves overcome of evil. Our Lord says, "If ye love them who love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye sa-

e Acts vii. 60. f 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. g Rom. xii. 21.

lute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?"[h] Gratitude and natural affection, however commendable, do not distinguish Christ's disciples from the world; but the love of enemies shows them to be partakers of the divine nature, the children of their Father who is in heaven; for hereby they imitate his mercy and undeserved goodness, who is kind unto the unthankful "and to the evil;" and "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."[k]

7. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[h]

Our Lord does not forbid his disciples to form a just and candid judgment of men, according to their avowed principles and outward conduct; for a little after he says, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits:"[i] by these they were to detect and judge of them. He also enjoins them to hold an offending

h Mat. v. 46, 47. i Luke vi. 35, 36. k Mat. v. 45, 48.
h Mat. vii. 1---6. Luke vi. 37. i Mat. vii. 15, 16.

impenitent brother as an heathen man and a publican,[k] which imports their judging and censuring him:[l] But the judging here prohibited is rash, unjust, and evil-judging, upon groundless suspicions, or from a censorious, malevolent, unmerciful disposition, which is gratified in detecting, magnifying, exposing, and condemning the faults and infirmities of others, without any view to their good. This is not only opposite to charity but to common benevolence, and is frequently masked under a cloak of zeal for the truth.[m] The apostle James also forbids this evil judging, "Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"[n] To speak evil of, and judge a brother unjustly, is practically to do the same to the law itself, in as far as it allows what he condemns in others, or forbids what he allows in himself. By this he sets himself up in place of the one Lawgiver, and assumes the office of a judge and censor, instead of being a humble subject, or doer of the law.[o]

Christ's words also intimate, that he who is invidiously intent upon spying out the faults of others, is quite inattentive to his own, and whilst he severely judges and condemns his brother for the

k Mat. xviii. 17. l 1 Cor. v. 3, 12, 13. 2 Cor. ii. 6. m James iii. 14---17. n Chap. iv. 11, 12. o See also Rom. xiv. 4, 10, 11, 12, 13. 1 Cor. iv. 5. James iii. 1

smallest failing, indulges himself in much greater. Therefore he terms him a hypocrite, and directs him to begin at home, and first cast the beam out of his own eye, and then he should see clearly to cast the mote out of his brother's eye: for till then he is incapable of dealing with his brother with judgment, conscience, and affection, or to any good end; but, on the contrary, exposes himself to judgment and condemnation. This saying of our Lord can never be too much attended to by his disciples.

8. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the synagogues, and in the streets that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly."[p] The same directions he gives as to prayer [q] and fasting.[r]

Almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, are here supposed to be duties incumbent upon Christ's disciples. The two first are much insisted on both by our Lord and his apostles.[s] The last, he intimates, would also be observed by his disciples, when he, the

p Mat. vi. 1---5. q Ver. 5---7. r Ver. 16---19. s Chap. xix. 21. Luke xi. 41. and xii. 33. Rom. xii. 13. Heb. xiii. 16. 1 John. iii. 17. Luke xviii. 1. and xxi. 36. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. Col. iv. 2. 1 Thess. v. 17.

Bridegroom, should be taken from them.[t] But here he chiefly insists upon the right manner of performing these duties; and particularly cautions them against ostentation, vain-glory, and hypocrisy. Acts of liberality and devotion are both public church-ordinances[u] and private duties of individuals. Our Lord here speaks of them chiefly in the latter sense; and though ostentation is equally criminal in either; yet when that which ought to be done in secret, is industriously exposed to view, it strongly indicates hypocrisy and vain-glory. The Pharisees did their alms in such an open ostentatious manner, as if they had summoned people by sound of trumpet to witness their liberality. Their prayers were put up in the most public places, where there was the greatest concourse of people to obsere them. And when they kept a fast, they took care to let it be known by a slovenly dirty appearance, and a rueful dejected countenance. Thus they did all their works to be seen of men, that they might be applauded, admired, and revered for their liberality, devotion, and mortification. This was their highest aim, and it was all their reward. Jesus also tells his disciples, that if they performed their alms and devotion with such views, they should have no reward of their Father who is in heaven; and therefore directs them to perform them in secret, without the least wish of being observed or applauded by men, but in singleness of heart, purely as in the sight of their heavenly Father, being fully satisfied with this, that

t Luke v. 33---36. u Acts ii. 42. xiii 2. 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

he alone sees them, approves and accepts of these fruits of their faith and love, and will at last openly acknowledge, and amply reward them before men and angels.[x] All this is perfectly consistent with that other direction, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."[y]

9. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."[z]

By *treasure* here our Lord does not mean the heart and affections, as many explain it (a sense in which it is never used); for he speaks of this treasure as one thing, and of the heart which loves it as another, in these words, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." This treasure consists of such things as may be laid up, stolen by the thief, or corrupted by the moth and rust; and therefore

x Mat. xxv. 34---38. y Chap. v. 16. z Mat. vi. 19---25

can mean nothing else than worldly riches or substance, which he afterwards calls *mammon*.—To *lay up* this treasure, is to accumulate, hoard, or (θησαυριζω) treasure it up in store; and it is plain, that our Lord here absolutely forbids his disciples thus to lay it up for themselves *upon earth*, where they were in danger of being deprived of it by the thief, the moth, or the rust, and where their enjoyment of it at any rate was but uncertain and momentary.

But though they are forbid to accumulate riches, by laying them up for themselves upon earth; yet they must neither be slothful in the means of attaining them, nor consume them upon their lusts; for he commands them to lay them up *in heaven*, where they will be secure against all accidents, unfailing or inexhaustible, and preserved as in bags that wax not old.[a] He elsewhere explains the *manner* in which they are to lay them up in heaven; "Sell that ye have, and GIVE ALMS; provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."[b] "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."[c] So that the way to lay them up for ourselves in heaven, is to give them in alms to the needy on earth. It is by being rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, that we lay up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life.[d] It is thus we "make to ourselves friends of

a Luke xii. 33. b Ibid. c Mat. xix. 21. d 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

the mammon of unrighteousness;" who, when we fail, receive us into everlasting habitations.[e] So that this giving, instead of impoverishing, is the way to make "rich toward God."[f]

He shews that all attempts to lay up treasures for ourselves both on earth and in heaven, are vain, impossible, and delusive, and that these two ways of treasuring are incompatible with each other. The man who "lays up treasures for himself" on earth, he describes as "not rich towards God."[g]—Many imagine they may accumulate treasures on earth, while their hearts are set on things above; but he affirms that the heart and treasure will always go together; "for where your treasure is there will your heart be also."—They may say, that they do not make their wealth their treasure; but the change of the name does not alter the thing. Our Lord calls that a man's *treasure* which he industriously "lays up for himself," and carefully retains as his own.—The greater part understand this precept not in an absolute but comparative sense; as if he had said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures *only* upon earth; but lay them up *also*, and *chiefly*, in heaven." But as the heart and treasure always go together, this gloss would make it lawful for us to divide our hearts between earth and heaven; whereas he forbids us to have our hearts on earth at all. If the heart is thus divided, the *eye* cannot be *single*,*

* The *single eye* is the bountiful or liberal eye or heart, Prov. xxii. 9. The original word rendered *bountifulness*, or *liberality*, is (ἁπλοτης)

e Luke xvi. 9. f Prov. xix. 7. 2 Cor. ix. 6. g Luke xii. 21.

nor the whole body full of light. However we may pretend to prefer the true riches, yet our *eye* to what we lay up on earth will be *evil*, or opposite to that bounty in almsgiving which is connected with the heavenly treasure, and so make us sow sparingly, or give grudgingly; and he intimates, that, in this case, the evil eye will prevail, filling our whole body with darkness, ver. 22, 23. But this appears still clearer from what he says in ver. 24. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." † Here God and mammon are represented as two masters, having opposite demands and interests. Mammon requires we should lay up for ourselves treasures on earth; God commands us to lay them up in heaven, by giving to the poor. To serve both, therefore, is impossible; for in proportion as we love and hold to the one, we must of necessity hate and despise the other.

He enjoins his disciples to make to themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, namely, by giving to the poor; and urges it in point of faith-

*singleness* or *simplicity*, Rom. xii. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 2. and ix. 11. 13. The LXX. have (ἁπλη) *single* soul for *liberal* soul, Prov. xi. 25. and God is said to give to all men (ἁπλως) *singly*, i. e. liberally, James i. 5.—The *evil eye* is the opposite of this; see Deut. xv. 9. Prov. xxiii. 6, 7. and xxviii. 22. Mat. xx. 15.

† *Mammon* is a Syriac word, and, according to the heathen mythology, was the god of plenty; hence it signifies riches, gains, or treasures. To *lay up* is to serve this god; and so the principle, *covetousness*, is called *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5.

fulness and justice; "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is (αλλοτριος) another's, who will give you that which is your own?"[h] Here he leads us to look upon our riches as not our own, but another's (i. e. God's), and that we are only intrusted with them as stewards. To use them therefore as our own, by hoarding them up on earth for ourselves, or consuming them upon our lusts, and so withholding them from the needy, especially those of the household, is to be unfaithful in that which is another's, and, like the unjust steward, to betray our trust, and waste our master's goods. He asks such unfaithful stewards, "Who will commit to your trust the true riches?—Who will give you that which is your own?" The *true riches* is the better and enduring substance in heaven; and is called *our own*, because not given in trust for others, but for our own enjoyment; nor for a season, but for ever, it being that good part which shall never be taken away from us. This true riches we have no ground to expect, if we are unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon.

This precept will never be admitted, even in principle, by any national profession of religion in this world; accordingly the compilers of the national standards have in a great measure made it void in

h Luke xvi. 10—13.

their explication of the eighth commandment against stealing, which they say, "requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of OURSELVES and others." * Surely this procuring and furthering our wealth, is to make rich if we can. By *lawful* means, no doubt; but what more lawful *means* can we use than the man who obtained it by the culture of his ground? and what better *ends* can we propose in laying it up for ourselves upon earth than his, namely, that his soul might take ease, and that he might eat, drink, and be merry? Yet he stands condemned as a fool for so doing, and all who follow his example: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God."[i]

It is indeed possible that a man may bestow all his goods to feed the poor without love;[k] but in vain would he pretend either to faith or love, if he make no conscience of laying up treasures in heaven by works of mercy to the poor.[l] There has been a great deal of talk and empty speculation among men about religion; but this is "pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father."[m] Much has also been said about what is called the *great work* of believing, and its various *acts*, in order to distinguish it from the belief of the truth; but clothing the naked, and feeding the hungry brother or sister, is an important branch of what the scripture terms the *work of faith*, and by which it is dis-

* Assembly's Shorter Catechism, Quest. 74

i Luke xii. 16, 19, 20 21. k 1 Cor. xiii. 3. l 1 John iii. 17, 18, 19. m James i. 27.

tinguished from a dead faith, or the faith of devils.[n] It is that ministering *labour of love* to Christ's name which is preferred to illumination and tasting of the good word of God,[o] and which he hath promised to reward in the judgment.[p] But whether the generality of professors are any better reconciled to such *acts of faith* as would hinder their laying up treasures upon earth, than they are to the simple *belief of the truth*, as opposed to every idea of *working* in order to be justified, is a question which concerns every one to solve in his own case. One thing is certain, that the strictest professors in our Lord's time derided his doctrine on this head;[q] for, in connection with their attempts to establish their own righteousness, they esteemed it their indispensible duty to "procure and further their wealth and outward estate."

10. "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"[r] &c.

Our Lord does not here forbid his disciples to be diligent in business, both for their own support, and that they may have to give to him that needeth, which is a duty frequently enjoined elsewhere;[s] but he forbids all anxious solicitude or distracting cares*

* The original (μεριμναω) imports such anxious care as divides or rends the heart.

n James ii. 14---21 o Heb. vi. 4, 5, 9, 10. p Mat. xxv. 34---41.
q Luke xvi. 14. r Mat. vi. 25---34. s Acts xx. 33, 34, 35. Rom. xii. 11. Eph. iv. 28. 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12. 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12

even as to the necessaries of this life, which arise from covetousness, or a distrust of divine Providence.*

This prohibition is nearly allied to the former; for the anxious fear of future want is one reason why many are so industrious to scrape together wealth, and so loth to part with it.

He sums up the things which are absolutely necessary to the body in food and raiment. A moderate competency of these is all that is needful for our present subsistence; and if we are truly in the spirit of pilgrims and strangers in this world, having our affections set on things above, we will not be anxious for more; "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."[t] Accordingly the Apostle exhorts Christians, "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content;" and he intimates, that all who are not satisfied with these, are under the influence of avarice and other lusts which threaten their destruction and perdition; "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."[u] Men's greatest anxiety as to the things of this life proceeds, for the most part, from imagi-

* In Luke xii. 29. we have also μη μετεωριζεσθε, which signifies to be in anxious suspense, or of a fluctuating doubtful mind, in opposition to its being staid upon God.

t Luke xii. 15. u 1 Tim. vi. 8, 9, 10.

nary and artificial wants, occasioned by their covetousness, love of pleasure, ambition, and distrust. When the Apostle says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;"[x] he plainly supposeth, that discontent with such things as we have arises from covetousness and want of trust in God. Were we content with necessary food and raiment; were our desires bounded by the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread;" and did we, instead of anticipating future evils, put our trust in the living God; our minds would be freed from anxious care, and our wants would be few and easily supplied. Moderation and temperance in the use of worldly things are also necessary to our being without carefulness: Accordingly the Apostle joins them together; "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."[y]

Jesus does not remove the anxious fears of his disciples, by promising them worldly riches as a security against future want, for these he forbids them to accumulate: but he gives them infinitely better security, namely, the paternal affection, care and constant attention of their heavenly Father; assuring them

x Heb. xiii. 5. y Philip. iv. 5—8

that he well knows their wants, and will certainly supply them in every thing necessary to their present subsistence. He condescends to reason with them on this subject in a manner inimitably simple, striking, and convincing. "Is not the life (says he) more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."[z] In Luke it is added, "Fear not, little flock; for it is "your Father's good pleasure to give you the king-

z Mat. vi. 25---34.

dom."[a] It is not easy to conceive how men can be seeking the kingdom of God in the first place, if they are in anxious perplexity as to the things of this life; or how they can really believe that it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom, if they cannot even trust him for daily bread. Christ would have his disciples, in the unsuspecting simplicity of little children, to depend entirely upon their heavenly Father for every thing they really need, casting all their care upon him, believing that he careth for them;[b] and that without anticipating the evils of to-morrow, which either may never happen, or be attended with suitable support, and over-ruled for their good.

11. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever shall save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"[c]

Self-denial and bearing the cross after the example of Christ, are two very comprehensive and essential precepts of the Christian religion, whereby it stands distinguished from all others, as well as from every accommodation of it to the nations of this world.

(1.) To deny ourselves, is to give up not only with the sinful gratifications of corrupt nature, but also with the most innocent and lawful enjoyments of this

a Luke xii. 32. b 1 Pet. v. 7., Mark viii. 34, 38. c Mat. xvi. 24, 25, 26.

life, when in any case they interfere or stand in competition with our allegiance to Christ.

As to sinful gratifications, there are three principal lusts in the world, which are inconsistent with the love of the Father, namely, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life."[d]—1. We must deny ourselves as to the *lust of the flesh*, or the love of sensual pleasure, taking heed lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness,[e] and fornication and all uncleanness must not be once named among us, as becometh saints.[f] We must also avoid every temptation and incentive to these fleshly lusts, such as chambering, revellings, and banquettings,[g] among which may be reckoned plays, masquerades, balls, and other fashionable entertainments, with all the delicate and refined arts of luxury, softness, and dissipation, which are only so many ways of making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.[h] In opposition to all these, we must be temperate in all things, keep under our body and bring it into subjection,[i] pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand ;[k] and thus through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, and crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts.[l]—2. We must deny ourselves the *lust of the eyes*, which is covetousness, or the love of riches.* I have already spoken of this

* Covetousness is called the *evil eye*, as has been observed, and here it is called the *lust of the eyes;* accordingly Solomon describing a miser, says, "There is no end of his labour, neither is his eye satisfied with riches," Eccl. iv. 8.

d 1 John ii. 15, 16. e Luke xxi. 34. f Eph. v. 3. g Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. Rev. xviii. 7, 9. h Rom. xiii. 14. i 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. k Mat. v. 28—31. l Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 24.

under the head of laying up treasures, and shall only observe, that Paul affirms the love of money to be the root of all evil.[m] This maxim will hold good, whether we consider it in relation to God, ourselves, or others.—It is the root of all evil as opposed to our duty to GOD. Covetousness is expressly called idolatry,[n] because riches occupy the chief place in the covetous heart, and become the ground of trust and confidence in place of the living God.[o]—In relation to *ourselves*, it becomes the occasion of pride and high-mindedness ;[p] and is a source of many complicated evils ; " for they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction, and perdition ; and while some have coveted after money, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."[q] And as to the life to come, the covetous have not " any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."[r]—The love of money is also the root of all evil in regard of our conduct towards *others*. It supplants natural affection ; makes us envy the rich ; shuts up our bowels of compassion from the needy ; is a source of oppression, falsehood, fraud, and injustice in our dealings, and sometimes breaks out in the more atrocious acts of theft, robbery, and murder.[s]—3. We must deny ourselves the *pride of life*, or the love of worldly honours, fame, grandeur, dignities, pre-eminence, &c. with all their supports and appendages,

m 1 Tim. vi. 10. n Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5. o 1 Tim. vi. 17. p Ibid. q Verse 9, 10. r Eph. v. 5. s James v. 4. Prov. i. 11---20.

such as riches, power, titles, pomp and splendor in houses, furniture, table, equipage, and dress. As many place their *life* and happiness in such empty vanities, and as they are all calculated to feed the *pride* and gratify the ambition of the human heart, so they are called *the pride of life*,* and the love of them is opposed to the love of the Father. Nothing is more diametrically opposite to the whole spirit of the Christian religion than pride and vain ambition. Our Lord frequently cautions his disciples against it, when striving among themselves who should be accounted the greatest;† and he corrects them by setting a little child in the midst of them, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."[t] The rule of preferment which he hath established in his kingdom is this, "Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."[u] In opposition therefore to that desire of worldly distinction, lordship, and pre-emi-

* The word Βιος, rendered *life*, frequently signifies that upon which a man lives, such as money, food, raiment, possessions, &c. and so is translated *living*, Luke viii. 43. ch. xv. 12, 30. ch. xxi. 4. and *good*, 1 John iii. 17. It also signifies a man's *course of life* in relation to his use of these things, Luke viii. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 4. both these ideas appear to be included in the text.

† Some confine this to spiritual pride and ambition; but as the disciples had worldly notions of Christ's kingdom, secular preferment must at least have been one object of their ambition.

t Mat. xviii. 1---5. u Chap. xxiii. 12.

nence, which take place among the men of this world, he says, "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant;" and this he urges by his own example, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[x] Accordingly they are exhorted not to "mind high things, but (τοις ταπεινοις συναπαγομενοι) be contented with low things;"[y] the brother of low degree is called to "rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that he is made low;"[z] and all of them, without exception of station or circumstances, are enjoined to "be subject one to another, to be clothed with humility,"[a] and to "be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring (not themselves but) one another."[b]

But this is not all; we must deny ourselves even the most *innocent* and *lawful* enjoyments of life, when either the wants of our brethren or our allegiance to Christ require it. Jesus directs his disciples to count the cost, and bids them lay their account with parting with houses and lands, and even with all that they have, for his sake;[c] nay, that they must often forego the favour and sustain the hatred of their nearest and dearest relations; and adds, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me,

x Mat. xx. 25---29. Luke xxii. 24---28. y Rom. xii. 16. z James i. 9, 10. a 1 Pet. v. 5. b Rom. xii. 10. c Mat. xix. 29. Luke xiv. 33.

is not worthy of me."[d] It is by things which are in themselves lawful, that we are most apt to be deceived and entangled, because a certain degree of attention is due unto them, and they only become sinful when they stand in competition with our duty to Christ, and are preferred. It is the duty of a man to love his parents and children, to marry a wife, to see the ground and prove the oxen he hath purchased, and to pay attention to his farm or merchandise; yet our Lord specifies such lawful things, to show, that if they are preferred to the great salvation, they will effectually ruin the soul, and exclude from the kingdom of heaven.[e]

(2.) To take up our cross and follow Christ, is to sustain the hatred and maltreatment of the world for righteousness sake, even to the loss of life itself, after the example of Christ. Our Lord here points to the instrument of his death, which was the cross; and thereby intimates, that his followers must have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and be conformed to him in his death. He forewarns them that they shall be hated of all nations for his sake;[f] and gives the following reason for it, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.—All these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."[g] He pronounceth them

d Mat. x. 34---38. e Mat. xxii. 5. Luke xiv. 18---25.
f Chap. xxiv. 9. g John xv. 18---22.

blessed who are persecuted for righteousness sake; and when men shall revile, persecute, and say all manner of evil against them falsely for his sake; assuring them that their reward is great in heaven.[h] This bearing of the cross was not to be confined to the Apostles and first Christians: for the apostle Paul says, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;"[i] it being part of their conformity to, and fellowship with Christ in this world,[k] and occasioned by the irreconcileable enmity of the world towards him and his real followers.[l] Nor must it be considered as a strange and singular thing,[m] "Whosoever (says Christ) doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple."[n] A great part of the New Testament was written for Christians in a suffering state, and can neither be properly understood nor relished but in circumstances somewhat similar. The cross is a needful course of discipline, suited to this imperfect state, which both exercises and improves every Christian virtue, such as faith, hope, patience, humility, meekness, passive courage or fortitude, forgiveness of enemies, &c. and so is subservient to the leading design of the Christian religion, which is to make us meet for the heavenly state. To enforce the duty of taking up the cross, our Lord adds, "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it." i. e. If he seeks to save his present life, or what pertains to it, by sinful compliances, he shall lose

h Mat. v. 10---13 i 2 Tim. iii. 11, 12. k Phil. iii. 10. l 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John xvii. 14. m 1 Pet. iv. 12---15. l John iii. 12, 13. n Luke xiv. 27.

eternal life; but if he suffer the loss of his earthly life for Christ's sake, he shall obtain the heavenly life, which is infinitely better. He farther shows, that this vain and transitory life, though it had all the pleasures, riches and honours of the whole world annexed to it, would be a poor and unprofitable exchange for the everlasting happiness of the immortal soul.

12. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."[o]

This precept does not absolutely prohibit a Christian from occasionally entertaining any of his rich relations or neighbours, who may be able to treat him in their turn; but it evidently forbids the frequent costly entertainments wherewith the wealthy mutually treat one another, to the exclusion of the poor, the wasting of their substance, and the hindering of their liberality where it may be really needed; in which they are only feeding their own luxury, pride, and selfishness. Such have their honour and reward from one another, and it is all they shall receive for the ostentatious elegance and liberal expence of their table. But in opposition to this, our Lord directs us, when we make a feast, to call or invite

o Luke xiv. 12, 13, 14.

the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, not merely to partake of the crumbs and offals in common with the dogs, but to share of the entertainment as guests. And as we can expect no returns of worldly honour or reward from such, he assures us that we shall be blessed, and fully recompensed at the resurrection of the just. How few pay any regard to this saying of Jesus, or whose feasts have any connection with the future reward!

13. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors,"[p] &c.

p James ii. 1---10.

That which the Apostle here forbids is respect of persons, or partiality; making a difference among men on account of their outward circumstance and appearance, or respecting the rich more than the poor. To illustrate his purpose, he supposes two persons coming into their assembly; one with a gold ring, in (λαμπρᾷ) splendid apparel; the other a poor man in vile raiment. The instance of partiality he condescends upon is, their furnishing the first with a seat in a good place, whilst they ordered the last to stand there, or sit here under their footstool. This is only a specimen of what he condemns in general; it is one of the least and most common instances of partiality, and includes a prohibition of every higher degree of it; yet such an instance as this he thought sufficient to convict them, and puts the question upon it, "Are ye not partial in yourselves?" He shows that this respect of persons is inconsistent with the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory[q]—that it proceeds from a judgment influenced and biassed by evil (διαλογισμῶν) reasonings[r]—runs counter to God's thoughts and ways in the dispensation of his grace to men, he having chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom; whereas they had despised the poor whom God had chosen, and honoured the rich, whom he had for the most part rejected as oppressors of the saints, and blasphemers of the name of his Son[s]—and that it is a most flagrant transgression of that royal law, which enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves.[t]

q James ii. 1. r Ver. 4. s Ver. 5—6. t Ver. 8—12.

Every religion in the world but that of Jesus admits this respect of persons. Even national Christianity adopts it as a sacred article of its creed. In every worldly nation pride and ambition must ever have scope, and wealth will always be attended with power and influence, and be held as a foundation of distinguished honour in itself, whatever be the character of its professors. Even such professors as condemn respect of persons in the gross, admit it in detail, and think it their bounden duty to make such a difference between the rich and the poor as the Apostle here condemns. They figure to themselves what an appearance impartiality carried this length would have in the world; and by this rule of judging they reject it at once as altogether ridiculous, rude, and absurd.

Commentators have also endeavoured to explain away the sense of this passage. They tell us, the (συναγωγη) *assembly* here spoken of, is the Jewish synagogue, which was used for civil and ecclesiastical judicature, as well as for religious worship; and that as the *footstool, judges,* and *judgment-seats,* are also mentioned, so the respect of persons forbidden must be a partial decision in favour of the rich in judicial proceedings, which is also forbidden in the law.[u] But it is evident that the Apostle addresses his Christian *brethren* who had *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*;[x] and calls this assembly *your synagogue,* which must therefore be a Christian assembly.[y] The scripture never mentions a *foot-*

u Lev. xix. 15. x James ii. 1. y Ver. 2.

*stool* with any reference to a court of judicature. The Apostle speaks not of *judges* by office, but of any of the brethren who might be guilty of partiality; such, he says, were become *judges* of evil thoughts or reasonings.[z] As to the *judgment-seats*, these did not belong to Christians; for they had then no civil authority. It was before the Jewish and heathen tribunals that the rich oppressors of the saints, and blasphemers of the name of Jesus, dragged the Christians, and not before their brethren.[a] The rich and the poor men are not here supposed *impleading* one another, or demanding judgment upon any cause between them; but simply *coming in* to their assembly, without the least hint of their having any concern with each other. Nor is it supposed that any *judicial sentence* or determination was given upon that occasion, but only a piece of respect paid to the rich man in preference to the poor with regard to a seat. In short, there is nothing in the whole passage that has the least appearance of a judicial proceeding.

But it will be objected, that we are exhorted to give honour to whom honour is due.[b] This is freely granted; but the question is, To whom, and on what account, is honour due? All the honour due to men, according to the scripture, is on account of some faint resemblance which they bear to God, who is the perfect standard and sum of all excellence, and to whom every just honour given to the creature ultimately refers. Were this principle admitted and properly understood, it might serve to adjust all our

z James ii. 4. a Ver. 6, 7. b Rom. xiii. 7.

ideas as to the foundation of honour, and enable us to judge of the justice of men's various claims and pretensions to it. Let us see if we can trace this principle in all the scripture injunctions to honour men.

We are commanded to honour *kings, governors,* and *magistrates,*[c] because they are ordained of God as his ministers for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well. In their office they exhibit a faint image of God's dominion and rule, and ought to be subjected to and honoured, not for wrath but conscience sake.—Servants are to "count their *own masters* worthy of all honour;"[d] because masters, in their power and authority over their servants, bear some resemblance of God, who says, "If I be a master, where is my fear?"[e] Christ is the master of Christians; therefore the honour and obedience which they give to their masters according to the flesh ought to have a reference to him.[f]—Honour is due to *parents* from their children;[g] for, as parents, they are a lively image of God, who is the father of his people, and claims the honour due to that relation: "If I then be a father, where is mine honour?"[h]—Wives are to be subject to and reverence their *own husbands*;[i] because their husbands, in relation to them, are a representation of Christ as head of his church.—*Pastors* are to be held (τιμιους) in honour, and esteemed very highly in love for their works sake.[k] The ground of this is the resemblance they bear in their work and office to Jesus

c Rom. xiii. 1---8. 1 Pet. ii. 13---18. d 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. e Mal. i. 6.
f Eph. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22---25. g Eph. vi. 1, 2. h Mal. i. 6.
i Eph. v. 22, 23, 24, 33. k Philip. ii. 29. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

Christ the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls.[l]—*Benefactors,* or men eminently useful in the good works of liberality and mercy, are worthy of honour, which is accordingly promised them;[m] because in these they imitate God, who is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.[n]—Christians are exhorted with brotherly love and honour to prefer *one another,* and "in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than themselves."[o] This mutual honour is due from the rich as well as poor; is the effect of humility and love; and the foundation of it is their honourable relation to God and conformity to his Son. Lastly, we are commanded to "honour *all men.*"[p] If this means any thing more than what has been already mentioned, it must have a respect to human nature, wherein all are upon a level; and the foundation of this honour must be, that "men are made after the similitude of God."[q] This calls for a benevolent, humble, and respectful carriage towards mankind in general; as they are possessed of a nature capable of immortal honour, and as God hath regarded men to such a degree as to give his Son to die for the lowest and vilest of them.

It appears, therefore, from scripture, that there is a *special* honour due to rulers, relations, benefactors, and Christian brethren, and also a *common* honour due to all men; and that the foundation of this honour is some similitude or resemblance which they bear to God. Now if these comprised all the

l Heb. xiii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 25. and v. 4. m Psal. cxii. 9. Prov. xxi. 21. n Psal. cxiv. 9. o Rom. xii. 10. Philip. ii. 3. p 1 Pet. ii. 17. q James. iii. 9.

classes of men to which distinguished honour is due by the law of Christ, and if the only just foundation of it be some imitation or resemblance of God; then every pretension to distinguished honour upon other grounds must be the claim of vanity and ambition, which Christians ought not to gratify either in themselves or others.

The scripture calls us to honour no man on account of his *wealth*. The New Testament treats riches with contempt; calls them the unrighteous mammon and filthy lucre; forbids Christians to lay them up; shows at large their evil and dangerous influence, and how hard it is for those that possess them to enter into the kingdom of heaven. They cannot therefore be a foundation of honour among Christians. True, indeed, the man who does not trust in them, or value himself upon them, who enjoys them with temperance, moderation, and a humble mind, and distributes them liberally to the needy, is truly honourable: but the ground of honour in this rare case is not the *possession*, but *proper use* of riches, or the *character* of the possessor.

Nor are we commanded to honour any on account of their *gay clothing* or *splendid apparel*, which is one of the ingredients of the pride of life. The Lord ascribes the gaudy ornaments of the daughters of Zion to their pride and wantonness;[r] and the apostles absolutely forbid Christian women, of whatever station, to wear broidered or plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; under which particulars

r Isa. iii. 16---24.

all other costly and gaudy fineries are prohibited. In opposition to which, they not only recommended the inward adorning of the hidden man of the heart, but also another kind of outward dress answerable to it, viz. *modest apparel.*[s] It would therefore be very inconsistent in Christians to respect others on account of that which they are prohibited themselves, and which is the undoubted effect of pride and vanity. So that from the whole it is evident, that no particular honour was due to the rich man mentioned by James; and that the preference they gave him to the poor man on account of his riches, gold ring, and splendid apparel, was a criminal respect of persons, unbecoming their holy profession, and which showed that their own minds were too much under the influence of worldly things.

Thus I have given a specimen of some of Christ's remarkable sayings, which clearly demonstrate that his kingdom is not of this world; for the peculiar laws of this kingdom contain a perfect system of non-conformity to the world in the most of its sage and approved maxims, and in all its favourite lusts and pursuits. The New Testament every where opposes the religion of Jesus Christ to this present evil world, even in its most decent and creditable appearances. It declares, "that which is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God;"[t] that "if any man love the world, or the things that are in the world, the love of the Father is not in him;"[u] that "the friendship of the world

s 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. t Luke xvi. 15. u 1 John ii. 15.

is enmity with God," so that "whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."[x] Therefore Christians are exhorted not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their mind, that they may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.[y] The distinguishing precepts of Christ are not intended for the world, but for his own peculiar people, who are not of the world, but strangers and pilgrims in it, chosen out of it, and redeemed from it; and therefore they cannot be accommodated to national establishments, interpreted by the rules of human prudence, or reconciled with the pursuit of worldly pleasures, honours, or interest, without being either explained away or greatly corrupted. Their most simple and obvious sense best agrees with their leading design, which is to direct Christians in their conformity to Christ in this world, that they may partake of his glory when he appears. The character of Jesus Christ, which is drawn by the four Evangelists, and so often referred to in the apostolic writings, is the best comment upon his sayings. In his life he set an example of what he taught his disciples, leaving it for their imitation; and therefore every gloss upon his words, which does not accord with his example, must undoubtedly be false.

To sum up and conclude this part of the subject, I shall add a few observations upon that short but comprehensive summary of Christian duty given by the apostle Paul in his epistle to Titus: "For the

[x] James iv. 4. [y] Rom. xii. 2.

grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."[z]

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation," is his free favour and sovereign mercy in saving guilty sinners through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and which is published to all sorts of men by the gospel. This is mentioned first as the foundation of all that follows; for till a man believes the grace of God as revealed in the gospel, he is destitute of the proper principles of gospel-obedience; and Christ's sayings will appear to him unreasonable, grievous, and many of them utterly impracticable. But when once he is made to know and believe the grace of God which bringeth salvation, it furnishes him with new principles and motives which excite to obedience, give strength for it, make it delightful, and in a manner unavoidable, nay, constrain to it. This grace of God teacheth us,

1. To *deny ungodliness;* i. e. to renounce and utterly forsake all infidelity, idolatry, impiety, profanity and superstition, either in principle, disposition, or practice, and every thing which is opposite to the belief, acknowledgement, love, fear, and service of

z Tit. ii. 11---15.

the one true God, or to the purity of his institutions and worship. It teacheth,

2. To deny *worldly lusts;* i. e. to subdue and mortify all inordinate affections and irregular desires after the enjoyments of this world; such as—"the lust of the flesh," or the love of sensual pleasures—"the lust of the eyes," or the love of riches—and "the pride of life," or ambition for worldly honour, fame, pomp, and pre-eminence; together with all those impious and malignant dispositions and passions which arise from disappointments and interferences in the gratification of these lusts; such as discontent and murmuring against God, and envy, hatred, wrath, strife, resentment, &c. against men, with all their practical effects.

But this grace of God teacheth not only the negative part of duty, or what we are to avoid, but also what we are to practise: not merely to "abhor that which is evil," but to "cleave to that which is good."[a] It teacheth us,

1. To *live soberly*, in the due government of our appetites, passions, and affections respecting the things of this world. Not only to subdue every *sinful* inclination and disposition, but also to moderate such as are in a certain degree *lawful;* that so our desires and aversions, our joys and griefs, our hopes and fears, may never be disproportioned to the nature, importance and end of their objects, or become sinful through excess. And as the effect of this, to be moderate in the *use* of lawful enjoyments;

a Rom. xii. 9.

that so we may not by them be unfitted for the Christian race and warfare, but be sober and vigilant, and, like those who strive for the mastery, to be temperate in all things, keeping under our body, and bringing it into subjection;[b] letting our moderation be so conspicuous as to be known unto all men, under the constant conviction that the Lord is at hand.[c] This sobriety is described by the Apostle in the most emphatic language; "But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."[d] Again, the grace of God teacheth us,

2. To live *righteously* in all our transactions with, or conduct towards men: To do no manner of injury, by word or deed, to any person, either in his character, person, or property, much less in his spiritual concerns; but, on the contrary, to be true in our words, exact in performing our promises, just and honest in all our dealings, and faithful to our trust.

The word (δικαιῶς) rendered *righteously*, sometimes signifies *benevolently*, which sense it likewise requires in this place, where it is expressive of the whole of our duty to our neighbour; for the law enjoins us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Upon

b 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. c Philip. iv. 5. d 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31.

which principle our Lord establishes the following rule of conduct: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."[e] By this rule we are as it were to exchange conditions with our neighbour, then consult our own breast what we would have him to do to us in that situation; and, having formed a reasonable wish for ourselves, to make that the rule of our conduct towards him. This is a short, plain, comprehensive rule, full of reason, self-evidence, and conviction; and it is a rule not merely of *strict justice*, but also of *good-will, kindness*, and *beneficence;* for in this manner we wish others to act towards ourselves. To live *righteously*, therefore, imports, that we should abound in all the offices of justice and humanity towards men, bearing them an unfeigned good-will, and having a sincere concern for their good, so as to rejoice in their prosperity, and be ready to promote it; to sympathize with them in adversity and affliction, and, according to our ability, to supply their wants, relieve their distresses, and contribute to their ease and comfort, both with regard to body and mind; to exercise patience and long-suffering toward them, bearing with their infirmities, and even putting up with injuries from them, without retaliation or resentment, &c. &c.

To live righteously includes also the faithful and conscientious performance of all *relative duties;* a few of which I shall just mention in scripture language.

[e] Mat. vii. 12.

(1.) The duties of Christian *subjects* to their *civil rulers*. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God—for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.—Wherefore we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also; for they are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing. . Render therefore to all their dues; tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.—I exhort therefore, that, first of all, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made—for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."[f] *

(2.) The mutual duties of *husbands* and *wives*. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of

* The New Testament was not written to direct the political affairs of the nations of this world. It gives no instructions how to model their constitution, nor determine which is the best form of government. It stands clear of all discussions about the *rights* of princes and subjects, and leaves such things to be decided by the principles of natural equity, or the opinion of communities as to what is most conducive to the general good. Nor does it prescribe to kings the duties which they owe their subjects, though these are clearly deducible from the description it gives of the nature and ends of their office. But it enjoins Christians every where to be subject to the existing powers in all civil matters consistent with their duty to God, and rather to suffer patiently for a good conscience than in any case to resist them by force.

f Rom. xiii. 1, 5, 6, 7. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. 1 Tim. ii 1, 2

the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.—Teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children; to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.—Whose adorning—let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord."—"Let not the wife depart from her husband; but, and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband."[g] On the other hand, it is enjoined, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.—So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies: he that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. —Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.—Be not bitter against them ---dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of

g Eph. v. 22, 23, 24, 33. Tit. ii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 1---7. 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

life, that your prayers be not hindered---and let not the husband put away his wife."[h]

(3.) The duties of *parents* and *children*. "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right---well-pleasing unto the Lord. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.---Let them learn to show piety at home, and to requite their parents; for that is good and acceptable before God."[i] And to parents it is said, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."[k]

(4.) The mutual duties of *masters* and *servants*. "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh---not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward---with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service; as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ.---Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour---please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. And

h Eph. v. 25, 28, 29. 33. Col. iii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 11.
i Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3. Col. iii. 20. k Eph. vi. 4. Col. iii. 21.

they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit."[l] The exhortation to masters is, "And ye masters, do the same things unto them;---give unto your servants that which is just and equal---forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."[m]

3. Lastly, the grace of God teacheth us to live *godly*. This includes the whole of the duty we owe more immediately to God, and supposeth---(1.) A firm belief of his being and perfections as manifested in creation and providence, but especially in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ; for it is a life influenced by the grace of God that bringeth salvation, and so must be a life of faith in the Son of God, in whom this grace is displayed, and through whose mediation it issues forth to the guilty."[n]---(2.) It imports a supreme love to God as manifested in Christ; reverencing and admiring, confiding and rejoicing in his wisdom, power, justice, holiness, faithfulness, amazing love, and sovereign rich grace; esteeming him as our chief and all-sufficient good, and the only proper object of our happiness; preferring the enjoyment of his favour to all the pleasures, riches, and honours of this world, and even to life itself;[o] and consequently dreading his displeasure, and hating sin

l Eph. vi. 5---9. Col. iii. 22---25. 1 Pet. ii. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Tit. ii. 9, 10. m Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1. n Heb. xi. 6. Gal. ii. 20.
o Mat. xxii. 37. Psalm ix. 10. lxxiii. 25, 26. and lxiii. 3.

the cause of it, above all temporal evils.[p]---(3.) A cheerful, constant, and sincere obedience to all his commandments, esteeming them concerning all things to be right.[q]---Delighting in the public and private exercises of his worship;[r] such as, attending his word and ordinances; addressing him in praise and adoration of his excellencies, in humble acknowledgments of our guilt and unworthiness, in earnest petitions for his mercy, and the supply of our manifold wants, in grateful returns of thanksgiving for all his benefits, and all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, confiding in his merits and mediation for acceptance.[s]---Performing all the duties of sobriety and righteousness after a godly sort, under the influence of his fear, authority, and grace; and even every the most common and natural action of life, whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, doing all to the glory of God.[t]---(4.) A hearty asquiescence in all the dispensations of his providence, whether prosperous or afflicting; fully persuaded that our most minute concerns are under his holy, wise, and gracious management. Content with the situation in which he hath placed us, and the portion he hath allotted us of the things of this life.[u] Patient, humble, and submissive under his chastisements, neither despising them, nor fainting when rebuked of him.[x] Casting all our care upon him, and resign-

p Mat. x. 28. 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15. q Psalm cxix. 6, 127, 128. 1 John ii. 4. and v. 3. r Psalm lxxxiv. 1---5. Acts ii. 42. s Heb. x. 19---23. and xiii. 15, 16. 1 John v. 14, 15. Col. iii. 17. t 1 Cor. x. 31. u Philip. iv. 11. Heb. xiii. 5. x 1 Pet. v. 6. Heb. xii. 5---12.

ing ourselves and all our concernments to his disposal ;[y] knowing that under his direction all things shall work together for, and finally issue in, our good.[z]

The Apostle next takes notice of the gospel principles or motives which influence the Christian obedience.---1. The first he mentions is, " that blessed hope ;" i. e. the hope of the heavenly inheritance,[a] the hope which is laid up for them in heaven, the hope of glory.[b] This is the grace which is to be brought unto them at the revelation of Jesus Christ ;[c] and so is connected here with his " glorious appearing ;" for he hath promised to come again, and receive his people to himself, that where he is there they may be also.[d] True Christians, therefore, are described as waiting for the Son of God from heaven, looking for him, and loving his appearing.[e] Now it is in " looking for," or earnestly desiring and expecting, " that blessed hope," that they are influenced to give up with every thing that comes in competition with it ; " to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts"---" not fashioning themselves according to the former lusts in their ignorance"[f]---" that they may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming ;"[g] but " be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."[h] It is the joyful expectation of this blessed hope that supports them under the various trials and afflictions of this life ;[i] and it is this which powerfully engages them

y 1 Pet. v. 7. Philip. iv. 6, 7. 1 Pet. iv. 19. z Rom. viii. 28. a 1 Pet. i. 3---6. b Col. i. 5, 27. c 1 Pet. i. 13. d John xiv. 3. e 1 Thess. i. 10. Heb. ix. 28. 2 Tim. iv. 8. f 1 Pet. i. 14. g 1 John ii. 28. h 2 Pet. iii. 14. i Rom. viii. 17, 18. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world"---"to be holy in all manner of conversation, as he who hath called them is holy[k]"—"to be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know that their labour is not in vain in the Lord."[l] Thus they walk by faith, and not by sight, while they look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen and eternal.[m]—2. Another influencing principle of the Christian life is, that "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." Christ's giving himself for us is the highest expression of divine love and condescension that possibly can be conceived,[n] and indeed it passeth knowledge;[o] it must therefore have the strongest influence upon those who believe it to produce love and obedience. The Apostle felt its influence in this respect to be in a manner irresistible. He spoke from experience when he said, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all have died; and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."[p] It made him renounce his own righteousness, with the pleasures, riches, and honours of this life, and cheerfully sustain the hatred of the world for Christ's sake: "God forbid (says he) that I should glory, save in the cross of our

k 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. l 1 Cor. xv. 58. m 2 Cor. iv. 18. and v. 7. n Rom. v. 8. 1 John iii. 16. and iv. 9. o Eph. iii. 19. p 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."[q] Again, Christ's giving himself for us, is the procuring cause of all spiritual and eternal blessings,[r] and also the highest evidence that they shall be conferred upon all for whom he died; for if God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"[s] Therefore, all the motives to love and obedience arising from these blessings, must refer immediately to the death of Christ, and derive their power from it. In this connection they appear in the most convincing, important, and affecting point of view, and so must have the strongest influence upon the heart and life. —3. Lastly, believers are also influenced to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, from the consideration that such a life is one of the great ends of Christ's death; for he "gave himself for us," not only "that he might redeem us from all iniquity," in respect of the guilt and punishment of sin, but that he might also free us from its pollution and servitude, "and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Christians look upon themselves as not their own, but bought with the price of Christ's precious blood, and bought for this end, that they may be his peculiar property, and consecrated to his service; and therefore find themselves under the strongest obligations both from gratitude and justice to live unto him that died for them; and to glorify God in their

q Gal. vi. 14. r Eph. i. 7. Gal. iv. 5. Heb ix. 15. s Rom. viii 32.

body, and in their spirit, which are God's.[t] In point of interest too they see the necessity of holiness and good works, as they know that without them no man shall see the Lord,[u] or stand with acceptance before the judgment-seat of Christ.[x]

These principles of the Christian obedience distinguish it from mere morality, which proceeds from motives of worldly ease and conveniency---from Deism, which acknowledges only the God of nature as discovered by reason or inward feelings---from Judaism which was laid in the constitution of a nation of this world, and was a service in the oldness of the letter---and from every corruption of Christianity, whereby it is accommodated either to the religious pride or worldly lusts of men.

HAVING taken a view of some of Christ's commandments to his disciples as individuals, and in relation to their conversation in the world at large, I shall now proceed to mention some others which they are to observe in their united capacity, and in a state of separation from the world. But it will be proper, in the first place, to explain a little the nature and ends of that separation.

### *Of the visible* SEPARATION *of Christians from the World.*

BY separation from the world, I do not mean that they should withdraw from human society, or shut themselves up like monks or hermits, which would be

t 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. u Heb. xii. 14. x 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. Mat. xxv. 31---46.

to render themselves useless in the world. Our Lord and his apostles kept up a free and open converse with mankind; and Paul admits that believers cannot altogether avoid keeping company with the fornicators, the covetous, the extortioners, and idolaters of this world, without going out of the world.[a] Christians are members of civil society, and ought to be useful and exemplary in the discharge of the duties which belong to their different stations and relations therein; shining as lights in the world, and adorning the doctrine of their Lord and Saviour in all things. But the separation from the world which the word of God enjoins Christians, is to break off all religious connection and fellowship with such as do not appear to be real believers in Christ, and subject to his authority.

When God chose ancient Israel to be a peculiar people to himself, he separated them from all other people in the world,[b] and strictly prohibited them from intermarrying, or having any intercommunity of worship with the nations.[c] It was only in this separated situation that they could observe his ordinances, or enjoy his special presence and promised residence among them in his tabernacle and sanctuary.[d] And as all their defections tended to throw down this distinction and mix them with the heathen; so in all their reformations they were called to come out from among them, and to separate themselves from all strangers unto the law of God.[e] But

a 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. b Deut. xiv. 2. 1 Kings viii. 53.
c Deut. vii. 1---7. d Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27, 28.
e Isa. lii. 11. Ezra ix. and x. 11. Neh. ix. 2. x. 28. and xiii. 3.

this separation was only a temporary partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles,[f] and a figure of the true separation of Christ's people from the world which was to take place under the gospel; for to this the apostle Paul applies it in the following words. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."[g] Here Christians are absolutely forbid to be unequally yoked together in religious fellowship with unbelievers;* alluding to the pro-

* Many explain this prohibition of the yoke of marriage with unbelievers, though they pay no regard to it even in that view. But the Apostle had wrote to the Corinthians before, "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away," 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. and therefore cannot in this place be calling them to come out from, or separate themselves from their unbelieving wives. Nor is he forbidding all civil intercourse with unbelievers; "for then (says he) must ye needs go out of the world," 1 Cor. v. 10. This prohibition therefore must respect church-commu-

f Eph. ii. 13, 14. g 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

hibition in the law of yoking an ox and an ass together.[h] The monstrous incongruity and unsuitableness of such promiscuous fellowship is set forth by a variety of striking contrasts; such as that of righteousness with unrighteousness, light with darkness,

nion, wherein he that believeth hath no part with an infidel, nor the temple of God any agreement with idols. It is such a yoking together as straitened the Corinthians in their own bowels, and which they are directed to give up that they may be enlarged in Christian affection, and so must be an exhortation of the same import with that in 1 Cor. v. 7.

Yet they err on the other hand who affirm, that the Christian separation has nothing to do with marriage; for ever since God separated a people to himself, there appears to have been a restriction in that matter.---Before the flood, the church of God seems to have been confined to the posterity of Seth, who are said to "call upon the name of the Lord," Gen. iv. 26. and are termed the "sons of God," chap. vi. 2, 4. These highly transgressed by taking them wives of "the daughters of men," or of the ungodly race of Cain; and the universal corruption introduced by this sinful connection, seems to have been the principal cause of the flood, chap. vi. 2---8. When God separated Israel to be a holy people to himself, he strictly forbad them to intermarry with the idolatrous Gentiles, lest they should turn them aside from the Lord, Deut. vii. 3, 4. and those who transgressed this law were obliged to put away their heathen wives, together with their issue, Ezra. ix --Under the gospel this law of separation is in part altered. Converts to Christianity already married to unbelievers, are not to put them away if they are pleased to dwell with them, neither are the children illegitimate as by the law of Moses, 1 Cor. vii. 12---15. But then, believers who are yet to marry are laid under this restriction, that they marry "ONLY IN THE LORD," ver. 39. i. e. only such as appear to be in the Lord, or Christians; even as to receive or salute persons *in the Lord*, is to receive or salute them as Christian brethren or sisters, Rom. xvi. 2, 11, 22. Philem. ver. 16. Paul asserts his power to lead about a wife, but he mentions only a *sister*, 1 Cor. ix. 5. The

h Deut. xxii. 10.

Christ with Belial, and the temple of God with idols. Believers are here declared to be the temple of the living God, wherein, he says, he will dwell and walk, and be their God, and they his people. From these considerations, the Lord most solemnly calls them to give up all religious communion with unbelievers; to come out from among them, and be separated, and not to touch the unclean thing, or meddle in the least degree with any of the defiling abominations of infidels. And he encourages them to this separation by great and precious promises, which are more than sufficient to counterbalance all the worldly disadvantages which attend it, even though they should be cast off and disowned by their nearest relations; for, "saith the Lord Almighty, I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters."

Christians are called to separate themselves not only from heathen idolaters, but from all unbelievers of every denomination. The Jewish church was of divine institution, and the members of it God's pecu-

New Testament exhortations to the mutual duties of husbands and wives, suppose both parties to be believers; for they are enforced by the example of Christ and his church, Eph. v. 22---33. and by their state, "as being heirs together of the grace of life," and "that their prayers be not hindered," 1 Pet. iii. 7. Without this they cannot be supposed to concur in "bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," as directed, Eph. vi. 4. I shall only observe farther, that such a near connection with unbelievers must be attended with snares to a Christian, tending to turn him aside from his profession; the word of God supposes this, and even Solomon the Wise was unable to resist them, 1 Kings xi. 1---9.

liar people; but when they rejected the Messiah, Peter calls the convicted Jews to "save themselves from that untoward generation;" this they immediately obeyed by gladly receiving his word, separating from the Jewish communion, and joining themselves unto the disciples.[j] In the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus, when Paul saw that "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples."[k]

But this is not all; they are called to separate not merely from professed unbelievers, but also from all false professors of Christianity; from all who do not appear to be really of the truth, hearing Christ's voice. Paul forewarning Timothy of the perilous times that should come by a corruption of Christianity under the profession of it, cautions him against the begun appearance of this in those whom he describes as "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" and exhorts him, "from such to turn away."[l] If in the days of the apostles, when Christianity laboured under every worldly discouragement, the mystery of iniquity began to work,[m] and many took up with a form of godliness, denying the power of it, how much more must this be the case now, when it has been so far corrupted as to become national, and when worldly honour and interest are connected with a kind of profession of it? The scriptures of the New Testament foretel and clearly describe a general apostacy from

j Acts ii. 40, 41. k Chap. xix. 9. l 2 Tim. iii. 5. m 2 Thess. ii. 7.

the most holy faith by a corruption of that faith, and a monstrous power that should arise in opposition to Christianity under the profession of it, and which, by means of the kings of the earth, should draw a form of godliness over the nations, denying the power thereof.[n] This is remarkably verified in the Romish church, mystically called *Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots;* which is the destined object of divine vengeance, and in relation to which this solemn call is given to the people of God, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."[o] The generality of Protestants imagine they have sufficiently obeyed this call in separating from the communion of that false church; but however important that separation was, it was not a separation of God's people from the world, as in the days of the apostles. The Reformation has indeed brought the scriptures to light, and broken the antichristian uniformity; yet, like the great harlot-mother, it hath formed an alliance with the state, committed fornication with the king's of the earth, accommodated itself unto the course of this world, and drawn the nations, as such, into its communion. Are not the nations called Protestant (whatever may be said of the comparative soundness of their speculative creed) as really of this world, and as fully conformed to it in all its lusts, as those from which they have separated? Are not the generality as glaringly destitute of the real power of godliness

n 2 Thess. ii. 3---13 1 Tim. iv. 1---4. 2 Tim. iii. 1---10. 2 Pet. ii. Jude ver. 4---20. Rev. xiii. xvi. xvii. xviii. o Rev. xviii. 4.

under the Protestant as Popish form of it? If this is the case (and who that knows any thing of true Christianity can deny it?) then the people of God, who are in such a connection, must be still dwelling with the daughter of Babylon, and as effectually mixed with the world in religious fellowship as ever. By such the divine call, "Come out of her, my people," still remains uncomplied with; and they would do well to consider seriously the danger of such a connection, and not be deceived with national forms of godliness, whether Popish or Protestant, which, however they may differ in other respects, must always agree in dispensing with the power of true godliness, and in connecting the disciples in religious fellowship with those who deny that power, in direct opposition to the word of God, which commands them to turn away from such.

This separation is not only a duty in itself, but a situation necessary to our keeping many other commandments of Christ, which cannot be observed in mixt communion with the world, but only among disciples in a state of separation from it; such as, his new commandment of brotherly love in its various branches, the ordinances of his house, the faithful and impartial exercise of its discipline, &c.

*Of their* UNION *among themselves in visible Church-fellowship, and the Scripture idea of a* CHURCH.

Christians must not only be separated from the world, but united together in a visible church state, in order to their observing all things whatsoever

Christ hath commanded. The word (εκκλησια) rendered *church*, signifies any kind of assembly or congregation, whether lawful or unlawful; but when used in a religious sense, it has two different significations in the New Testament.

1. It signifies the whole body of the redeemed, whether in heaven or on earth, who are called the general assembly and church of the first-born.[q] This is that church which Christ loved as his spouse, and for which he gave himself.[r] It is termed the whole family in heaven and in earth;[s] all the building fitly framed together, and growing unto an holy temple in the Lord, who is both its foundation and chief corner stone.[t] This church is not many, but one; it is the same with Christ's one body, which is animated by one Spirit;[u] it has but one tabernacle or seat of worship, one holy place, viz. heaven itself, one altar, priest, and sacrifice;[x] and was typified by the ancient church of Israel, which was but one congregation. At present this church is *invisible* to us, and will not appear until Christ's second coming, when all the elect shall be gathered in, raised from the dead, and appear with him in glory. This is the only true catholic or universal church, there being no such thing mentioned in scripture as a catholic *visible church* in this world, as some affirm; and it is to the visible members of this church that baptism belongs.

2. The word also signifies a particular congrega-

p Acts xix. 32, 39, 41. q Heb. xii. 23. r Eph. v. 25, 26. s Chap. iii. 15. t Chap. ii. 20, 21. u Chap. iv. 4. x Heb. ix. 11, 12, 24. xiii. 10. and x. 12, 19, 21.

tion of visible believers, with its bishops (i. e. elders) and deacons, regularly assembling in one place, for the performance of religious worship, and the observation of Christ's institutions.—It signifies a *single congregation;* such was the church at Jerusalem, Antioch, Ephesus, Philippi, Corinth, &c.—Each of these societies were composed of *visible believers,* or such as by their profession and walk appeared to be saints and faithful.[y] —It had a plurality of *elders* or *bishops* to rule and labour in the word and doctrine;[z] and also of *deacons* to take care of the poor and serve tables.[a]—It regularly assembled *in one place,*[b] there being no such thing in the apostolic age as a church made up of different congregations meeting in different places.—The end of its assembling was to perform *social worship* and observe Christ's *institutions,* of which afterwards.

These are the outlines of a visible church of Christ, such as the apostles planted in every place where there was a sufficient number of disciples to compose it. Such a church is an organized body, complete in all its parts,[c] and has the full power of government and discipline within itself; being subject to no other authority or jurisdiction but Christ's, who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand.[d] It is a *visible* representation of Christ's true catholic church, which is at present *invisible,* and therefore is design-

y 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 1. Philip. i. 1. Col. i. 2. z Acts xiv. 23. xx. 17. Philip. i. 1. Tit. i. 5. 1 Tim. v. 17. a Acts. vi. 1---7. Philip. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 8---14. b Acts ii. 1, 46. iv. 31. and v. 12. 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20. c 1 Cor. xii. 27. d Rev. ii. 1.

ed by the same epithets; such as, God's building, habitation, temple, house, Christ's body, spouse, &c.[e] To such a church were the ordinances delivered,[f] as also the instituted discipline;[g] and it is only in such a society, separated from the world, that they can be observed according to their primitive institution. Now, to such a church as has been described were the baptized disciples added, that they might be edified in the faith, and be in a situation to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded.[h]

*Of the nature and grounds of the Christian* UNION.

BEFORE we proceed to the duties of church-members, it will be necessary first to take a view of the nature and grounds of their union upon which these duties are founded.

The apostle Paul frequently illustrates this by the union which subsists among the members of a living human body: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."[i]—"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."[k] By this figure he intends not only the catholic church, but

e 1 Cor. iii. 9, 16, 17. Eph. ii. 22. 1 Tim. iii. 15 1 Cor. xii. 27 2 Cor. xi. 2.
f 1 Cor. xi. 2.
g Mat. xviii. 15---21. 1 Cor. v
h Acts ii. 41, 47.
i Rom. xii. 4, 5.
k 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13

also a particular visible church, like that at Corinth, to which he directly applies it; "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular;"[l] For the one body of Christ is not to be seen in this world, but as represented by a particular society of the saints, and among them only does its unity appear. The same apostle, exhorting the Ephesian church to keep this unity, sets before them the grounds of it; "There is (says he) one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."[m]

Here we see that the body of Christ is one—1. By having *one Spirit*, viz. the Holy Spirit, communicated to it from Christ the living Head. This, like the soul in the natural body, is the principle of *life* and *motion*; without which it would be only a dead unanimated mass. It is also the principle of *unity* among all the parts. Were there different spirits of contrary minds, dispositions, and qualities in one body, it would create a strange and unnatural discord among the members; but in the body of Christ there is but one Spirit, which animates every part, diffuses a common feeling and sympathy throughout the whole, and unites it into one living system, having one mind, interest, and affection. This is the unity of the Spirit; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. In consequence of this—2. They have *one*

l 1 Cor. xii 27. m Eph. iv. 4—7.

*hope* of their calling, i. e. one object of hope, viz the glorious heavenly inheritance, which is "the hope laid up for them in heaven,"[n] termed the "hope of their calling," because "God hath called them unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus."[o] They are begotten again to this lively hope of the inheritance by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,[p] and have the Spirit as the earnest of it in their hearts.[q] This unity of hope gives them all one interest, pursuit, and aim.[r]—3. They have *one Lord*, even Jesus Christ, the alone Saviour, Lord, and Head of his church, by whom are all things, and they by him.[s] This one Lord they confess to the glory of God the Father as the Lord their Righteousness, and as their sole king, lawgiver and judge, exclusive of all other lords, and masters; esteeming all his laws of indispensible obligation, and so studying to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded them.—4. They have *one faith*, i. e. one doctrine of faith, which is emphatically styled *the truth*. The testimony of God concerning his Son is this one faith. This is "the faith of God's elect,"[t]—"the faith once delivered to the saints," for which they must contend earnestly[u]—"the faith of the gospel," for which they must jointly strive, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind.[x] All the saints have obtained like precious faith with the apostles in the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ,[y] and so have an unity of the faith

n Col. i. 5. o 1 Pet. v. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 14. p 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. q Eph. i. 13, 14. r Philip. iii. 12—18. s 1 Cor. viii. 6. t Tit. i. 1. u Jude ver. 3. x Philip. i. 27. y 2 Pet. i. 1.

and knowledge of the Son of God.[z]—5. They have *one baptism*, which is connected with the confession of the one faith; and which, as it is here distinguished from the one Spirit, must be baptism in water. This is the only baptism which Christ hath instituted, and commanded to be administered to those who are made disciples in all nations unto the end of the world;[a] and therefore must be the one baptism of his church, and an indispensible prerequisite to church fellowship, he having placed it in the very entry to his kingdom;[b] accordingly none were admitted into the visible unity of Christ's body without it.—6. They have *one God and Father* of all, who is above all, being the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him the God and Father of the whole family in heaven and on earth;[c] he is also "through all, and in them all" by his Spirit, according to Christ's prayer, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us—I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me."[d]

These are the catholic unities of the body of Christ, and no particular society can visibly represent that one body which does not appear to be one in these particulars. This union can only become visible in their joint and explicit confession of the one faith and hope of the gospel, and declared pur-

z Eph. iv. 13. a Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. b John iii. 5.
c Eph. iii. 14, 15. d John xvii. 21, 23.

pose of heart to cleave unto the Lord and to one another in observing all things whatsoever he hath commanded them. By this they discern one another to be of the truth and hearing Christ's voice, and upon this ground they are "knit together in love" for the truth's sake, which completes their union; for "charity is the bond of perfectness."[e]

It is evident from the nature and grounds of this union, that they must be all of *one mind* in the faith and obedience of the gospel. For how can they have fellowship in the truth, or love one another for its sake, if they differ about the truth itself, and are not one as to the foundation of their hope? and how can they walk together as a body in observing the commandments of the one Lord, if they are not agreed as to what he hath commanded them, and do not hold all his laws of indispensible obligation? Therefore the Apostle most solemnly exhorts the Corinthian church, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."[f] Without this unanimity they cannot "with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;"[g] nor can they have a conversation becoming the gospel, which consists in "standing fast in one spirit, with one mind, jointly striving for the faith of the gospel."[h] The Lord hath promised, in relation to New Testament times, to give his people *one heart*, and *one way*, that they

e Col. iii. 14. f 1 Cor. i. 10. g Rom. xv. 6. h Philip. i. 27

may fear him for ever;[a] and Christ hath prayed that his disciples may be one, and that as an evidence to the world that the Father hath sent him.[b] This was actually exemplified in the church at Jerusalem, where "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul;[c] and this is what every church of Christ must aim at, and will attain, in so far as the truth is the bond of their union and hinge of mutual love.

Societies that are not united upon the truth are not much affected with differences about it. They speak of being one in the *essentials* of religion, as if the religion of Jesus contained non-essentials which they may avowedly dispense with at pleasure. But if we come to particulars, it will be found, that their union does not stand upon any determinate view or explicit agreement even in what they call essentials, but upon one another's supposed *sincerity* or *conscientiousness* in their different opinions. This is the hinge of modern charity, which, instead of rejoicing with the truth, makes light of Christ's authority, and pays its devotion to human pride.

*The* DUTIES *of Church-members in relation to each other.*

THESE duties are all comprehended in love, and are just the practical exercise of it, answerable to the nature of their connection, and the various circumstances and conditions of each other. We shall therefore,

1. Consider the principle which must influence

a Jer. xxxii. 39. b John xvii. 21, 22, 23. c Acts iv. 32.

and pervade all these duties, viz. *brotherly love*; "A new commandment (says Christ) I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."[i]

Our Lord terms this a *new* commandment, and that most properly. The love enjoined in it is quite different from that universal benevolence which, both by the law of nature and of Christ, we are bound to have to our brethren of mankind in general, and from that love and affection we owe to our natural relations and connections in particular. It is also very different from that peculiar love which by the law of Moses was enjoined old Israel as brethren of the stock of Abraham, and members of the Jewish church. This will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That he gives this commandment only to his *disciples*; "A new commandment I give UNTO YOU." The Apostle connects it with the command to believe on him;[k] and indeed none but they who really believe on the name of the Son of God are capable of obeying it.

(2.) The objects of it are not the world at large, nor any particular earthly nation like the Jews, but *one another*; "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love ONE ANOTHER;" that is, all of every nation whom they can discern to be saints and faithful brethren in Christ, judging by the visible characters whereby he points them out to them in hi;

i John xiii. 34, 35. k 1 John iii. 23.

word. Every one who appears to be of the truth, hearing Christ's voice, is the object of this love, and none but such; for it is the love of those who know the truth to one another, and that for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them, and shall be with them for ever.[l]

(3.) The motive or reason enforcing it is the *example* of his own love to them; "AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, that ye also love one another." This he afterwards repeats, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU; and he intimates how he loved them in the very next words,[m] Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* Yet in this manner he manifested the greatness of his love towards them; for, says the Apostle, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us;" and he makes the same use of it, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another—we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."[n] This is a new motive to brotherly love, peculiar to the gospel, and which respects only Christ's friends, whom he so loved as to lay down his life for them; and it supposes them believing this, and on that account loving one another as brethren for whom he died.

* Christ did more, he laid down his life for enemies, Rom. v. 10. but as he is not here speaking of love to *enemies*, as in Mat. v. 44. but to *one another* as friends and brethren, he enforces it by this instance of his love towards them considered as his friends.

l 2 John ver. 1, 2. m John xv. 12, 13. n 1 John iii, 16. and iv. 10, 11.

(4.) He makes their obedience to this commandment the great *evidence* of their being his disciples; "By this shall ALL MEN KNOW that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." From this it is plain, that the love he requires is not a mere latent inactive principle in the heart, for no man could know them by that; but a fervent, active, beneficial love; a love in deed and in truth, appearing by its most genuine fruits and effects in the whole of their conduct towards each other, so as strikingly to distinguish them from all the world besides, and mark them out to all men as his disciples. This love is not only an evidence to others, but also to their own consciences, that they are Christ's disciples: We "know (says the Apostle) that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death.—My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For, if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not," (viz. as void of this love,) "then have we confidence towards God."[o] Lastly, by this love to the saints, as arising from love to his name, will Christ distinguish his people at last from all false professors, when he comes to judge the world,[p] and then the world shall know, that the Father hath loved them as he hath loved him.[q]

o 1 John iii. 14, 18, 19, 20, 21. p Mat. xxv. 34---41. q John xvii. 23

Thus it appears that Christ's commandment of brotherly love is a *new* commandment, and peculiar to the New Testament. It was not indeed new among Christians when John wrote his first epistle; and therefore he says, "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning;[a] viz. of the gospel;[r] "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."[s] Yet, in respect of the former state of things, he again terms this commandment *new:* "Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him."[t]

It is chiefly in relation to this law of brotherly love that believers are termed *righteous*, and are said *not to sin*,[u] and that in distinction from the children of the devil, who commit sin and transgress this law, by hating the truth and those who are of it,[x] according to the original enmity put between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.[y] When this enmity appeared in the Jews against Christ, he tells them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do

a 1 John ii. 7. r Philip. iv. 15. 2 John ver. 5, 6. s 1 John iii. 11.
t Chap. ii. 8, 9, 10. u Chap. iii. 6, 7. x Ver. 4, 10, 12. y Gen. iii. 15.

the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God—Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him," &c.[z] Agreeable to this the Apostle says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."[a] By *sin* here is evidently meant hatred to the saving truth, and to the children of God for its sake; for it is the sin of the devil, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. Now the children of God cannot commit this sin of the devil and his children. They may be weak in faith, imperfect in love, and have differences on other accounts; but they can never hate the truth, nor one another on that account, like "Cain who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous;"[b] for "whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."[c] In this sense, "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.—Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God:"[d] Accordingly Peter says, "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren—being born again, not of corruptible seed,

z John viii. 37—46. a 1 John iii. 8. b Ver. 12.
c 1 John iii. 15. d Ver. 6, 9.

but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever."[e] This therefore is the great differencing law, by which Christ's disciples are distinguished from the world as not sinning, and as doers of righteousness; for "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother,"[f] and Christ in the judgment will denominate them *righteous*, from their labour of love to his name, in feeding, clothing, entertaining, and visiting him in his needy members.[g]

From the whole it is evident, that obedience to this new commandment holds an important place in the religion of Jesus, and that there is no true Christianity without it. It is not only the visible distinction betwixt Christ's disciples and the world; but the great evidence of our being born of God, and of our knowing him[h]—of his dwelling in us, and we in him.[i] It is the main proof of our loving him, and of his love being perfected in us:[k] so that in vain would we pretend to love God, or to enjoy his love, while we hate our brother; "for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"[l]—It is the principal thing wherein we resemble God and bear his image, "for God is love;"[m] and wherein we imitate Jesus in that most endearing part of his character, his love to his people.[n]—He repeatedly mentions it as the

e 1 Pet. i. 22, 23. f 1 John iii. 10. g Mat. xxv. 35, 36, 46.
h 1 John iv. 7. i Ver. 16. k Ver. 12. ch. v. 1. l chap. iv. 20.
m Ver. 7, 8. n 1 John iii. 16. Eph. v. 2.

special fruit we are to bring forth by abiding in him the true vine.[o]—It is every where preferred to the most useful and extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and even to those illuminations whereby men may taste of the good word of God, and receive it with joy;[p] and as, on the one hand, it is vain to pretend to this love without showing it in deed and in truth by its proper fruits,[q] so, on the other, though we should bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and give our body to be burned, and have not love, it will profit us nothing:[r] nay, love is preferred even to faith and hope,[s] both for the *excellency* of its nature, as being more like unto God who is love,[t] and also for its *duration;* for when faith and hope, which respect unseen objects,[u] shall have given place to the sight and enjoyment of them, then love shall be perfected, and continue for ever in the heavenly state.

I shall conclude these remarks with the apostolic description of it. "Love (αγαπη) suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but (συγχαιρει) rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.—And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."[x] Here we see it is opposed to

o John xv. 4, 5, 12, 17. p 1 Cor. viii. 1. and xiii. 1, 2. Heb. vi. 4, 5, 9, 10. q 1 John iii. 17, 18. r 1 Cor. xiii. 3. s Ver. 13. t 1 John iv. 7, 8. u Rom. viii. 24, 25. 2 Cor v. 7. Heb. xi. 1 x 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13.

pride, self-seeking, envy, evil-surmising, and every malignant passion and disposition.—It is kind and beneficent, engaging us in all respects to serve one another.[y]—In this imperfect state it is attended with much self-denial, and requires the exercise of humility, patience, meekness, and long-suffering in bearing one another's burdens. But then it is not blind and indiscriminating; it "rejoiceth not in iniquity," so as to sooth or bear with a brother in any error or practice contrary to the gospel, but is painfully anxious to correct and recover him. It "rejoiceth with the truth;" viz. the saving truth of the gospel, which manifests the love of God. This is the first object of its delight; and its complacency and joy in the brethren is just in proportion as it perceives this truth dwelling in them; for it is love to them for the truth's sake.[z]

This command of brotherly love must have a special respect to the visible churches of Christ; for though all the saints every where are the objects of it,[a] yet it is but few of them we have access to know; and there are some even of these to whom we cannot perform the various offices of love but occasionally. But in a visible church of Christ, the disciples, have access to know and distinguish one another as the objects of this love; for here all the members are united together upon the open and explicit confession of the one faith, which is the foundation of their joint hope, and for the sake of which they love one another. Here also they are placed in

y Gal. v. 13. z 1 Thess. iii. 7, 8, 9. 2 John ver. 4. 3 John ver. 3, 4. a John xvii. 20, 21. 1 Cor. i. 2. Col. i. 4.

a proper situation for the constant and regular exercise of the duties of this love towards their brethren *whom they have seen*, and by which their profession of love to God and to the saints in general *whom they have not seen*, is brought to a clear and decisive test.[b] The greater part of the exhortations in the New Testament to the duties of brotherly love, are addressed to Christians, not as detached individuals, but as members of churches, and in relation to each other in that connection.

This love is absolutely necessary to the union and edification of a church. It is "the bond of perfectness;" and unless the members are "knit together in love" to the truth, and to one another for its sake, they have no real union of heart and soul; in which case, their agreement in mere speculations and outward forms will prove but as a rope of sand. The most useful gifts will not edify the body without love; for "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth."[c] The church at Corinth were enriched by Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift;[d] yet being deficient in love, instead of being "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment," they perverted these very gifts of the Spirit to the purposes of pride and faction; and there were among them such "envying, strife, and divisions," that they could neither purge out the old leaven, nor eat the Lord's supper in a proper manner.[e] To rectify these disorders, the Apostle describes and recommends

b 1 John iv. 20. c 1 Cor. viii. 1. d 1 Cor. i. 5, 7
e Chap. iii. 3. v. 1, 2, 6. and xi. 17---21.

unto them the more excellent way of charity.[f] Let us now briefly consider,

2. The *practical exercise* of this love in a church of Christ. This in general consists in performing the various duties which result from the nature of their connection, answerable to their several gifts and abilities, and according as the different circumstances and conditions of each other may require.

(1.) It has already been noticed, that the *union* of members in a church of Christ is compared to that which subsists among the members of the natural body. The Holy Spirit is the vital principle in the body of Christ answerable to the soul in the body of a man; for "he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."[g] Love to the truth, and to one another for its sake, is like the animal fluid in the natural body, which circulates through all the members. It follows, therefore, that as their faith groweth, so their mutual joy in the truth, and the charity of every one of them towards each other, must abound and circulate freely.[h] On the other hand, divisions about the truth, and opposition to it, must necessarily obstruct this circulation.[i] This obstruction will occasion grief, and excite the members to use the appointed means for removing it,[k] unless the Spirit is departed, and the body become dead and insensible.[l] From the nature of such a connection it is evident, that all the members are deeply interested in one another's sentiments, conduct, and circumstances; and that the duties arising from it chiefly consist in

f 1 Cor. xii. 31. and xiii. g Chap. vi. 17. h 2 Thess. i. 3.
i 2 Cor. vi. 12. k Chap. vii. 7---13. l Rev. iii. 1, 2.

edifying one another in the faith, cultivating mutual love, abounding in the self-denied labour of it, and in removing every thing that tends to obstruct its free circulation, either in the body at large, or among any of the members. To perform these duties aright, it is absolutely necessary that every one should, in the first place, diligently attend to the dispositions and motives of his own heart, and take heed to his way according to the word of God.

(2.) Christ hath bestowed a variety of *gifts* upon his church, and from hence arise a number of correspondent duties. The Apostle observes, that "the body is not one member, but many.—If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?—and if they were all one member, where were the body?"[m] It is not the *number*, but *diversity* of members with their different offices, that is here intended, without which the natural body would be imperfect. In like manner, the church of Christ would not be a complete organised body without a diversity of gifts and offices. If the whole had but one kind of gift, however excellent, it could no more answer all the needful purposes of a church, than an eye or an ear those of the natural body. But Christ by his Spirit hath conferred a variety of gifts upon his church,* dividing to every man, severally

* Among these the Apostle enumerates some miraculous gifts, and also extraordinary offices; such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 9, 10, 28. Eph. iv. 11. which were necessary at first to give forth the gospel revelation and confirm it; and this being

m 1 Cor. xii. 14, 17, 19.

as he will ;[n] and as the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, not for his own private advantage, or to gratify his pride, but to profit the body withal ;[o] so every one, according to the nature and measure of his gift, should act his part in the body for the good of the whole. "Having therefore gifts differing (says the Apostle) according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, let us wait on our ministring ; or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation ; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity (or liberality ;) he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."[p] "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister (deaconize,) let him do it as of

done, they have ceased, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. Yet the churches still enjoy the benefit of these gifts in the writings of the New Testament, even as the Jews had Moses and the prophets in the writings of the Old, Luke xvi. 29, 31. But the ordinary standing office-bearers appointed in the churches are bishops (or elders) and deacons, Acts xiv. 23. Philip. i. 1. among whose essential qualifications none of the extraordinary gifts are mentioned, 1 Tim. iii. 1---14. Tit. i. 5---10. Gifts for ruling, teaching, exhorting, ministring, &c. are still to be found in the churches of the saints ; and these, with other gifts useful to the body, are also in various degrees conferred upon the members, and ought to be exercised by them in their proper place, and in orderly subordination.

[n] 1 Cor. xii. 11. [o] Ver. 7. [p] Rom. xii. 6---9.

the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ."[q]

These exhortations are no doubt addressed in the first place to office-bearers, who are enjoined to take heed unto themselves and to all the flock over which they are made overseers; to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood;[r] to preach the word; to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, "rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."[s] These are pastoral duties which they owe the flock committed to their charge. On the other hand, the flock in relation to them are exhorted, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you."[t]—"And we beseech you, brethren, to know them who labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake."[u]—"Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* For the scripture saith, Thou shalt

* The Apostle is not here speaking of *ruling* and *teaching* as two distinct offices in the church, but as different branches of one and the same office; for he elsewhere lays it down as the essential qualifications of every elder, that he be "apt to teach," and also that he should know how to rule, or "take care of the church of God," 1 Tim. iii. 2, 5. Every elder is alike authorised by office both to rule and teach; but every one is not equally gifted for both, nor

q 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. r Acts xx. 28. s 2 Tim. iv. 2.
t Heb. xiii. 17. u 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and, The labourer is worthy of his reward."[x]—"Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things."[y]

But whilst we give all that place which the word of God requires to the gifts and office of pastors, we must not imagine that all the gifts needful for edifying the body are confined to them. Christ hath distributed a variety of gifts in different measures among all the members, and all of them are useful in their place; so that "the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you."[z] All indeed are not rulers, yet all have their part in the discipline of the church, and nothing can be concluded without their unanimous concurrence."[a] All are not teachers by office, yet all are enjoined to "teach, exhort, warn, and admonish one another,[b] that speaking the truth in love, they may grow up into him in all things who is the head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working

alike diligent in the exercise of his gifts. The elders that "rule well" (or with diligence, Rom. xii. 8.) are to be counted worthy of double honour or maintenance, especially they who not only rule well, but also labour in the word and doctrine, and so fulfil every branch of their office with diligence and faithfulness.

x 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. y Gal. vi. 6. z 1 Cor. xii. 21.
a Mat. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 4, 7, 12. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7 b Col. iii. 16.
1 Thess. v. 11, 14. Heb. iii. 13. Rom. xv. 14.

in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love."[c] All are not overseers by office, yet all are commanded to "look diligently,* lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble them, and thereby many be defiled; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau,"[d] &c. It is evident, therefore, that all the members have a mutual charge one of another, and that the body EDIFIES ITSELF in love when every one in his proper place acts his part according to the measure of the gift bestowed. In order to this, they have much need to attend to the exhortations, "Let all things be done to edifying."[e] —"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory."[f]—"I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."[g] Such as are possessed of superior gifts must not value themselves on that account, nor despise their brethren whose talents are inferior; nor must the latter envy the former, or aspire after places or functions in the body for which they are no way fitted; but every one ought to keep his place, and

* The word (επισκοπουντες) here rendered *looking diligently*, signifies to act the part of an overseer or bishop in mutually inspecting and watching over one another. It is the same word which in 1 Pet. v. 2. is translated *taking the oversight*.

c Eph. iv. 15 16. d Heb. xii. 15, 16. e 1 Cor. xiv. 26.
f Philip. ii. 3. g Rom. xii. 3.

exercise his particular gift, with humility and love, for the good of the whole.

(3.) In considering the duties of church-members, we must also take into our view the different *cases, conditions,* and *circumstances* of the brethren to which these duties relate. These furnish the occasions for drawing forth their love into action in all the various forms into which it is commanded to be exercised. To instance in a few:

Some are weak in the faith, and as children in understanding in comparison of others. Such must not be despised or treated with neglect, nor must a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall be put in their way. "Whoso (says Jesus) shall offend one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.—Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."[h] On the contrary, they must be received and treated with much tenderness and forbearance: "Him that is weak in the faith receive you, but not to doubtful disputations."[i] "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."[k] And though we must not yield to them any of the truths

h Mat. xviii. 6, 10, 11. i Rom. xiv. 1. k Chap. xv. 1, 2.

or laws of Christ, but instruct them with meekness and patience; yet if they scruple at some things which are purely indifferent, we ought to pay a tender regard to their consciences, and rather humour their weakness than offend or stumble them.[l]

Some may be distressed in their consciences by a sense of guilt, while their minds are clouded as to the ground of hope; or they may be discouraged and dejected in their minds by various trials, and so ready to faint and give way under their fears and afflictions. In such cases we are called to "comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak;"[m] to "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for their feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed;"[n] to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them who suffer adversity, as being ourselves also in the body."[o]—Others may be poor and needy in their circumstances, and unable to procure the necessaries of life. To such we must show our love, not in word or in tongue only, but in deed and in truth;[p] by "distributing to the necessity of saints," and being "given to hospitality."[q] Nor is this duty confined to the rich, who are to be "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;"[r] for the poor widow is commended for casting in two mites, which was all that she had;[s] and so are the Macedonians, because that, "in a

l 1 Cor. viii. 9---13. m 1 Thess. v. 14. n Heb. xii. 12, 13.
o Chap. xiii. 12, 13. p 1 John iii. 17, 18. q Rom. xii. 13.
r 1 Tim. vi. 18. s Luke xxi. 2---5.

great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality."[t] In short, all the members must tenderly sympathize with one another in all their weaknesses, trials, and afflictions, whether in mind, body, or circumstances, and contribute to each other's comfort and relief to the utmost of their power. Thus in the natural body, "those members which seem to be more feeble, are necessary. And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked; that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."[u] Agreeably to this, they are exhorted, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.[x] Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.[y] Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."[z]

There are snares and temptations which arise from situation, age, constitution, and other circumstances; and as all the members have the same

t 2 Cor. viii. 2. u 1 Cor. xii. 22---27. x Philip. ii. 4.
y Rom. xii. 15. z Gal. vi. 2.

care one for another, these ought to be particularly attended unto.—The rich will frequently need the caution not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God—to condescend to men of low estate,* and to rejoice in being made low.[a]—The poor will need to be exhorted to

* The rich are not exempted more than the poor from performing the humblest offices of love and condescension to the meanest brother when he stands in need of it. I cannot here omit taking notice of the striking lesson which our Lord gave his disciples on this head, and which is so characteristical of the genius of his religion; I mean his *washing his disciples feet* as an example for their imitation. The account of it is as follows: "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.----So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them," John xiii. 3----18. It is evident that our Lord, by this amazing instance of condescension, teacheth in general, that all his disciples without exception should stoop to the lowest and most servile offices of love to each other as occasion may require. But it cannot well be imagined that any are practically complying with this in general, who avowedly neglect, or perhaps ridicule and despise the particular duty here exemplified and enjoined, namely, the washing of one another's feet. Yet it is not more amazing than true, that the most of those who would be thought real Christians, pay no regard to the example and authority of Christ in this particular; on the contrary, many of them reckon it far beneath their station to stoop so low as to imitate him whom they call their Lord and Master; which is

a 1 Tim. vi. 17. Rom. xii. 16. James i. 10.

let their conversation be without covetousness, and to be content with such things as they have, since God hath said, that he will never leave nor forsake them.[b] The afflicted must be cautioned, not to despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when they are rebuked of him; as he chastiseth them in love and for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness.[c]—The aged men may need the exhortation to be sober, grave, temperate, sound in "faith, in charity, in patience,"[d] as becometh their profession, years, and experience.—"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour," whether in word, dress, or deportment, "as becometh holiness; not false accusers, not given to much wine," under pretence of supporting decaying nature: and, instead of amusing themselves or others with slander, idle chat, or old wives fables, that they "be teachers of good things;" and particularly, "that they may teach the young wo-

upon the matter to say, that the servant is greater than his Lord. All the petty acquired distinctions whereby one worm of the dust is raised above another, naturally his equal, sink into nothing when compared with the native dignity of HIM, "who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" and every the most humble act of condescension which the highest monarch can possibly perform towards the meanest slave, is not once worthy to be named, when we think of HIS condescension, "who emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant---humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," and that for the sake of his guilty creatures; yet this is the example set before Christians, Philip. ii. 4---9. and it must be much out of view before they can be either proud of their condescension, or think any office of love to a disciple below them.

b Heb. xiii. 5, 6. c Chap. xii. 5---12. d Tit. ii. 2.

men to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children; to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."[e]—Young men likewisse must be exhorted to be sober-minded;"[f] to be prudent, considerate, adviseable, meek, and chaste, guarding against pride, wilfulness, intemperate passions, and youthful lusts.[g]—Some may happen to be too much entangled with the affairs of this life, or intent upon schemes and projects to get gain;[h] such must be reminded, that one thing is needful, and that the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches will choke the word, and make them become unfruitful.[i]—Others may have got into an indolent idle habit, walking disorderly, working not at all, but are busy-bodies, sauntering about and prying into other people's affairs, and perhaps stirring up jealousies and animosities among the brethren.[k] Now them that are such must be solemnly commanded and exhorted, "that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."[l]

Many other cases might be mentioned which require cautions, advice, and exhortations: and these ought to be administered with humility, faithfulness, and affection; "Not rebuking an elder, but enteating him as a father, and the younger men as brethren; the elder women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters, with all purity."[m] In

c Tit. ii. 3, 4, 5. f Ver. 6. g Tim. ii. 22. h 2 Tim. ii. 4. James iv. 13. i Luke x. 41, 42. Mat. xiii. 22. k 1 Tim. v. 13. l 2 Thess. iii. 11, 12. m 1 Tim. v. 1, 2.

watching over one another, they must beware of indulging groundless jealousies, or of acting the part of busy-bodies in other men's matters;[n] curiously prying into, and meddling with things wherein they can have no conscientious concern. Likewise in all their reproofs and admonitions, they must take heed lest they indulge a spirit of cavilling, or be angry with their brother without a cause; all which is opposite to that charity which "is not easily provoked and thinketh no evil." On the other hand, this mutual oversight requires mutual subjection, without which it could answer no good end. The apostle Paul exhorts to this mutual subjection: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."[o] And Peter having exhorted the younger to submit themselves unto the elder, adds, "Yea all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."[p] Every one therefore ought to suffer the word of exhortation or admonition, even from the very meanest or weakest of his brethren, and in humility and godly fear to pay all due attention to it.

### *The* RULES *of* DISCIPLINE *in dealing with offenders.*

Let us now briefly consider the *rules of discipline* whereby they are to conduct themselves in dealing with offenders. As all the members are indispensibly bound to love one another for the truth's sake, so, to make this duty possible, none must

n 1 Tim. v. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 15. o Eph. v. 21. p 1 Pet. v. 5.

be received into, or retained in their communion, but such as appear to be the proper objects of this love, or to have the truth dwelling in them. Every opposite appearance in any member must necessarily occasion pain to the rest, and obstruct the exercise of their complacential affection towards him until it is removed. Christ, therefore, hath appointed discipline in his churches for reclaiming offenders and recovering backsliders, and also for expelling incorrigible transgressors and manifested hypocrites. This discipline is essential to the very being of a Christian church, and wherever the faithful and impartial exercise of it is neglected, they cannot long preserve their separation from the world, the purity of their communion, or the fervent exercise of mutual love for the truth's sake.

Offences are either private or public, and consist either of error in sentiment or immorality in practice; and these again may be distinguished into such as admit of gradual dealing, and those which require immediate exclusion.

A *private offence* is a trespass committed against a brother, or some irregularity falling under his notice, whereby he is grieved, or his charity weakened, and which is not publicly known to the church. In this case, the rule prescribed by our Lord (Mat. xviii. 15—21.) must be strictly adhered to in the whole of the procedure; "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." In this first step two things must be carefully attended to;

1. That the party offended do not smother the offence in his breast, or harbour secret resentment or grudges against his offending brother, which is inconsistent with love, or a due concern for his soul. He must without fail "go and tell him his fault," or "rebuke him"[q] with faithfulness and affection. So the law also enjoins, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him,"[r] or, "that thou bear not sin for him." 2. This must be done privately, "between thee and him alone," without exposing him, or communicating his fault to others under any pretence whatever; which is no more than what genuine love and friendship will dictate, and what Solomon also recommends: "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and discover not the secret to another."[s]—"If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother;" i. e. if he shall accept the reproof, acknowledge his sin, and profess repentance, he is won and recovered from the error of his way; and therefore he must be heartily forgiven, and the matter buried as if it had never happened. So our Lord commands, "If he repent, forgive him; and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent,* thou shalt

* This command to forgive a brother as often as he repents, agrees with his answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus

q Luke xvii. 3. r Lev. xix. 17. s Prov. xxv. 9. t Luke xvii. 3, 4.

forgive him:"[t] And to this case the exhortation applies—"forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."[u]

—"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Should the private rebuke fail of success, he must not be discouraged or drop the affair, nor must he make it known to many, or bring it immediately to the church; but he must take along with him only one or two more of the brethren to hear and judge of the case, to concur with him in admonishing the offender, and, if need be, to bear witness of the matter to the church; as the law also directs, "at

saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven," Mat. xviii. 21, 22. But this will not apply to such sins as are mentioned in 1 Cor. v. 11. for seventy times seven instances of drunkenness, fornication, extortion, &c. would be more than sufficient to denominate a man a drunkard, fornicator, or extortioner, with whom we are forbid to eat; and if we must retain such characters in the communion upon mere verbal professions of repentance, we could never obey the command to put away the evil from among us, ver. 13. This frequent forgiveness, therefore, must respect only such offences and provocations among brethren as arise from the imperfection of their love, and the remainder of pride and ambition which still cleaves to them, as appears from the connection of this command with the preceding context; see Mat. xviii. 1---14. Though a brother should often commit trespasses of this kind, he cannot be put away while he hears admonition, humbles himself, and confesses his fault with penitence. So that cutting off, according to the rule Mat. xviii. proceeds upon the evidence which the offender gives of reigning pride or enmity, in refusing to hear his offended brother, then the one or two more, and last of all the church.

u Col. iii. 13. Eph. iv. 32.

the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established."[x] If this second step succeed in bringing him to repentance, the procedure must stop here; he must be forgiven.

—"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church."* If he also resist the admonition of the one or two more, and still continue impenitent, then his offence must be represented to the church, i. e. to the whole assembly or congregation whereof he is a member. This is the last resort, beyond which there is no appeal under heaven. If he hear the church, and with penitence acknowledge his guilt, they, as well as the person originally offended, must forgive him, and confirm their love towards him.—"But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." The admonition of the church is the last and most solemn means of conviction which Christ has appointed in this world; and if that has no effect in bringing him to repentance, he must no longer be regarded as a Christian brother, or a member of the body, but excluded from the commu-

* The word *church* is no where used for an assembly of bishops or elders in distinction from the people; but it is frequently used to distinguish the body of the people from their office-bearers, Acts xi. 26. xiv. 22, 23. xv. 4, 22. and xx. 17, 28. Here it includes both elders and people. The elders are to preside in conducting discipline; and the people are to concur both in binding and loosing, not by a majority of voices, but by unanimous agreement; so that it is the deed of the whole church, or *the punishment inflicted of many*, 2 Cor. ii. 6.

x Deut. xix. 15.

nion, and held as an heathen man and a publican, with whom it was esteemed unlawful for a Jew to keep company, or so much as to eat.[y] So that a single congregation of saints with its presbytery, when gathered together in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, are commanded (εξαρειτε τον πονηρον εξ ὑμων αὐτων) to *put away the evil from among them*,[z] answerable to the law directing the supreme judgment in the church of Israel.[a] As the whole of this matter ought to be conducted with solemnity, and accompanied with prayer for the Divine blessing; so Christ hath promised to countenance and ratify every step of it, whether public or private, wherein they act or petition agreeable to his will. "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."[b]

A *public offence* is such as is committed openly in the world, or is known to the church; in which case, the two first steps of the foregoing rule will not apply. Whatever private admonitions may be given, no private satisfaction can be admitted; for as all are supposed to be offended, so all require to be satisfied; and as no private confession can answer that end, the affair must at all events come before the

y Acts x. 28. and xi. 3. 1 Cor. v. 11. z 1 Cor. v. 13.
a Deut. xiii. 5. xvii. 7. and xxi. 21. b Mat. xviii. 18---21.

church, and the offender be dealt with according to the third step of our Lord's rule, agreeably to the apostolic direction, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear;"[c] where we may also see, that the end of public discipline is not merely to reclaim or expel the offender, but also to move others with fear lest they should offend in like manner.

If the offence consist of an *error in sentiment* which affects the faith or obedience of the gospel, all due pains must be taken for the instruction and recovery of the offender. "Brethren, (says James) if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."[d] And this more especially belongs to the elders, who must "be able by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince gainsayers."[e] In doing which, "the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth."[f] But if, after all, he "consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness," he clearly discovers himself to be "proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of

c 1 Tim. v. 20. d James v. 19, 20. e Tit. i. 9. f 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth:"[g] and the command is, "From such withdraw thyself."[h] The Apostle beseeches the brethren, "Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."[i] With regard to the false teachers among the Galatians, he says, "I would they were even cut off who trouble you."[k] Men of this stamp are denominated heretics: and the rule with respect to such is, "A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."[l] No church can long maintain the purity of Christian doctrine unless they are attentive to these directions.

If the offence be *immorality in practice*, we must distinguish the case of one who through temptation, seduction, or surprise, has fallen into such sins, from the case of him who lives and walks in them. With respect to the first, the Apostle says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."[m] So that he is not to be immediately cut off like a hopeless mortified member, but (καταρτίζω) set to rights, or into joint again, like a broken or dislocated bone. Some of the Corinthians were guilty of uncleanness,

g 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5. h Ver. 5. i Rom. xvi. 17, 18.
k Gal. v. 12. l Tit. iii. 10, 11. m Gal. vi. 1.

fornication, and lasciviousness; yet the Apostle does not direct the church to cut them off at any rate, but expresses himself in such a manner as clearly implies, that their repentance would prevent his bewailing them, and using the rod of discipline when he came.[n] The procedure in this case must be directed by the rules already mentioned.

But if a member has repeatedly fallen into sins of this nature, or is living in the practice of any one of them, so that his character may be denominated by it; whenever this appears, he must be immediately expelled the communion as a wicked person, whatever repentance he may profess in words. Accordingly, the Apostle does not at first direct the Corinthian church to proceed against the incestuous person according to the foregoing rules, or to accept of a profession of repentance in case he should appear penitent; but simply, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh," and "to put away the evil from among them."[o] The characters that fall under this rule are such as these: "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."[p] Paul warning Timothy, gives another catalogue of them: "This know, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their ownselves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, un-

n 2 Cor. xii. 21. and xiii. 2. o 1 Cor. v. 3, 4, 5, 13. p Ver. 11.

holy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."[q] Yet should persons of such characters afterwards give striking evidence of their repentance, and that they are converted from the error of their ways, they must be received again into the communion of the church; for so the Apostle directs the church at Corinth with respect to the incestuous person: "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love towards him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things."[r]

As the discipline of Christ's house is intended to preserve the pure and unfeigned exercise of brotherly love among the members, so the whole of it ought to be conducted in love to the offender. All the admonitions and reproofs ought to be administered in love; and when he can no longer be loved as a brother, but must be cut off as a wicked person, even that deed must be done with a view to the salvation of his soul, or "that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" and should it be blessed for

q 2 Tim. iii. 1---6. r 2 Cor. ii. 6---10.

his conviction and repentance, the church must be ready to imitate the Divine mercy in forgiving, comforting, and confirming their love towards him.*

* Some deny that a person after he has been twice cast out, ought ever to be received again, let his repentance be what it may. "If a person (say they) should incur the censure of the church after his second reception, we dare not receive him again; because we have no scriptural instance of a *third reception* of the same person."---To this I answer, Neither have we a scriptural instance of a *second excommunication* of the same person; and is this a sufficient reason why none should be cast out a second time? If it be said, that the law of Christian separation from the world, and the rule of discipline require that a person should be cast out as often as he appears an impenitent offender; then, by parity of reason, it must also be admitted, that the command to forgive, restore, and confirm love to a repenting brother (Mat. xviii. 21, 22. 2 Cor. ii. 6---9.) obliges us to receive him as often as he appears truly to repent. Peter asks if he might limit his forgiveness of his brother to seven times, but "Jesus saith to him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven," (Mat. xviii. 21, 22. Luke xvii. 4.) though any one of the offences supposed, if unrepented of, would be a sufficient ground for excision, according to Mat. xviii. 15---18.

They further argue, "That it is impossible we should obtain a fuller evidence of his repentance than that which he hath given before, and which has in fact been proved to be hypocritical." *Christian Practices of the Church in St. Martin's le Grand, London*, p. 23. *Glas's Works*, vol. ii. p. 243. Edin. edit.

This reasoning makes Christ's law of repeated forgiveness of no effect. Peter with more reason might have told his Master, that he durst not forgive his brother even seven times, because it was impossible to obtain a fuller evidence of his repentance than that which he had six times given before, and which had as often been proved to be hypocritical. But this argument is altogether inconclusive; for a brother's present offence does not prove that his repentance for a former one was hypocritical. David sincerely repented of his guilt in the matter of Uriah, though he afterwards numbered the people. Peter truly repented his having denied his Lord, though he afterwards dissembled

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that this discipline was never intended for the nations of this world assuming the name of Christian churches, nor even for any district of a nation called a parish. I may likewise add, that societies neglecting this discipline, or whose constitution renders the exercise of it simply impossible, can with no propriety be called churches of Christ, though there may be Christians among them.

## *The* PUBLIC ORDINANCES *of Divine Service.*

BEFORE we mention the ordinances themselves, it may be proper to take notice of the *day* on which the apostolic churches assembled to observe them.

at Antioch. And though it should appear that a former profession of repentance was hypocritical, it does not follow that the present must be so likewise.

Some ground this implacable tenet upon Tit. iii. 10. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." But the first and second *admonition* does not mean the first and second *excommunication*; neither does *reject* here mean such a final rejection as admits of no absolution in case of repentance, so that this text is nothing to the purpose.

It is admitted, however, that when a person has been oftener than once cut off for a repetition of the same offence, something more than a verbal confession is necessary to evidence the sincerity of his repentance, such as a change of conduct in that particular manifested for some time; but to lay it down as a rule never to receive him again after he has been twice cast out, appears to me a practical denial of the grace of God, and looks as if men had forgot that they themselves have constant need of divine mercy to pardon their repeated daily offences.

God at first blessed the seventh day, and set it apart in commemoration of his resting from the work of creation ;[s] and he gave it to Israel in their law to be observed both in commemoration of that,[t] and also of his redeeming them from Egyptian servitude, and making them enter into his rest in the earthly inheritance.[u] But long after Israel had entered into that rest, "he again limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts ;"[x] from which the Apostle shows, that there is another rest besides the former two, into which men are still called to enter, viz. the heavenly, and also a *limited day, another day* than the seventh spoken of, answerable to that rest, and which remains for a (σαββατισμος) Sabbatism to the people of God; and the reason he gives for keeping of a Sabbath on this other day is, "For he (viz. Christ) that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his."[y] So that it is to be kept in commemoration of Christ's having finished the work of redemption, and entered into his heavenly rest. The day appointed for the Christian Sabbath appears also to be pointed at in Psal. cxviii. 25. "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will joy and be glad in it;" and if we enquire what day is there intended, we shall find, that it is the day on which Christ triumphantly ascended to Jerusalem ;[z]—on which he was "made the head of the corner,"[a] which Peter explains of his resurrec-

s Gen. ii. 2. t Exod. xx. 8---12. u Deut. v. 12---16. x Psal. xcv. 7.
y Heb. iv. 3---11. z Mat. xxi. 8---17. a Psal. cxviii. 22.

tion and exaltation;[b]—and on which he shed forth the Holy Spirit on his apostles;[c] all which events took place on the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. Accordingly, it is recorded as matter of fact, that the apostolic churches kept the first day of the week as a day of sacred rest, and came together on that day to observe the ordinances of divine worship;[d] and as they did this under the direction of the inspired apostles, we must necessarily conclude, that the practice originated in divine institution. When John wrote the Revelation, this day was universally known among the churches by the name of *the Lord's day*;[e] which intimates, that it was instituted by the Lord Jesus, sacred to his honour, and commemorative of his work, even as the breaking of bread is for these reasons called *the Lord's Supper*.[f] We may also observe, that as the earthly rest has come to an end, so the Jewish Sabbath is set aside with all the other types and shadows, as the Apostle shows, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the Sabbath-days; which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."[g]

The ordinances which the apostolic churches observed when they came together on the first day of the week, may be gathered from the practice of the church at Jerusalem, which set the example to the rest. Having gladly received the word, and been baptized and added, it is said "They continued

b Acts iv. 10, 11. c Acts ii. 32, 33. d Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20. with xvi. 2. e Rev. i. 10. f 1 Cor. xi 20. g Col. ii 16, 17.

stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers —praising God,"[h] &c.

1. They continued stedfastly in the *apostles doctrine*. They not only held fast what the apostles had already taught them, but constantly attended their public ministry in the church, that they might be further confirmed and edified in the faith, and instructed to observe all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them. All who are born again of the incorruptible seed of the word, will naturally as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the same word, that they may grow thereby.[i] For this end Christ hath appointed the ministry of the word as a public standing ordinance in his church;[k] and the first and chief gift he bestowed for this purpose was that of apostles.[l] Here it may be necessary to notice,

(1.) That though the apostles do not now personally teach in the churches, yet their doctrine is contained in the writings of the New Testament; and therefore if the churches would continue stedfastly in the apostles doctrine, they must carefully attend unto the reading of these inspired writings, together with the other scriptures, in their public assemblies. They must not believe every spirit, or implicitly follow uninspired teachers, but try the spirits whether they are of God; and the standard to try them by is the doctrine of the apostles; for John says, "We (the apostles) are of God: he that knoweth God hear-

h Acts ii. 41, 42, 47. i 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. k Eph. iv. 12.
l 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11.

eth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."[m] Peter declares that the design of writing his epistles was, that Christians might be able after his decease to have these things always in remembrance;[n]—that they might be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour;[o] and he also recommends all the epistles of his beloved brother Paul, with the other scriptures, as the only antidote against their being led away with the error of the wicked, and falling from their own stedfastness.[p] The writings of Moses were read in the Jewish synagogue every Sabbath-day. The like end is proposed in writing the New Testament * revelation,[q] which was also commanded to be read in the churches as it was given

* The apostolic decrees were the first part of the New Testament revelation that was committed to writing; and one end for writing them was, that they might be read in the churches even as Moses was in the synagogues. This appears from the connection of the 20th and 21st verses of Acts xv. "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being READ in the synagogues every Sabbath-day."

Now that I have mentioned the apostolic decrees, it may be proper to take notice of the prohibition as to *things strangled* and *blood*. It is evident that this prohibition was none of the peculiarities of Moses' law; for long before the giving of that law, when God at first made the grant of animal food to Noah and his posterity, he made it with this reserve, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things

m 1 John iv. 1, 6. n 2 Pet. i. 15. o Chap. iii. 1, 2
p 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16, 17. q Acts xv. 20, 21.

forth;[r] accordingly, Timothy is exhorted to give attendance to reading, as well as to exhortation and doctrine.[s] The reading of the scriptures, therefore, is a public ordinance in the churches of Christ; and this is what they have in place of the personal ministry of the apostles and prophets.

(2.) *Preaching* and *expounding the word* is another public institution for edifying the church. This is the proper work of elders or pastors. Moses was of old time not only read but preached in the synagogues;[t] and Christ hath not only given apostles, prophets and evangelists, but also pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of his body.[u] Their office is to feed

but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat," Gen. ix. 3, 4. By the law of Moses, both the Israelite and the stranger were forbid to eat any manner of blood under the severest penalty, Lev. xvii. 10---15. Under the gospel, the apostolic decrees which ascertained the freedom of the Gentile converts from circumcision and the peculiarities of Moses' law, at the same time most solemnly commanded them to abstain from things strangled and blood, as well as from pollutions of idols and fornication; and that as *necessary things*, which were not to be held indifferent. These decrees were delivered to the Gentile churches to keep, Acts xvi. 4. they are mentioned by James several years after as still in force, chap. xxi. 25. are referred to by our Lord in the epistle to the church of Thyatira, and commanded to be held fast till he come, Rev. ii. 24, 25. It is therefore clear, that blood, either mixt with the flesh of things strangled, or by itself, has been absolutely prohibited in all ages, and still continues to be so under the gospel. Yet men under a strict profession of Christianity have made void this Divine law, and can plead for blood-eating as part of their Christian liberty.

r Col. iv. 16. 1 Thess. v. 27. s 1 Tim. iv. 13. t Acts xv. 21. u Eph. iv. 11, 12.

the flock, and to labour among them in the word and doctrine;[x] in doing this they must preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort,[y] &c. For this work the written word of God abundantly furnishes them; for "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God (or teacher) may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;"[z] so that they have no occasion for any other source of instruction. And while teachers take heed unto themselves and unto their doctrine, showing themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth contained in the scriptures,[a] the flock must attend unto their ministry as the ordinance of God, and as a special means of their continuing stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine. Another means of this is,

(3.) The *mutual exhortations* of the brethren. This is a duty expressly and repeatedly enjoined;[b] and that not merely in private or occasional meetings, but in the public and stated assemblies of the church; "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."[c] None of the members who have any gifts are exempted from this duty, ex-

x 1 Pet. v. 2. 1 Tim. v. 17. y 2 Tim. iv. 2. z Chap. iii. 16, 17. a 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. 2 Tim. ii. 15. b Rom. xv. 14. Col. iii. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 18. Heb. iii. 13. c Heb. x. 24, 25.

cept women; who are enjoined to "keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."[d] Yet in private teaching they have their sphere of usefulness, particularly among their own sex.[e] Thus the various gifts of the members have room for exercise, that "speaking the truth in love, they may grow up into him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ."[f] And here strict attention must be paid to the general rule, "Let all things be done decently and in order."[g]

2. They continued stedfastly (τῃ κοινωνια) *in the fellowship*. This does not mean fellowship in the gospel; for they enjoyed that continuing in the apostle's doctrine, whereas this is added as something distinct; nor does it mean fellowship in breaking of bread, or in prayers; for the intervening word (και) *and*, plainly distinguishes these as additional articles; nor can it signify church fellowship in a general view; for it is enumerated among the particular duties of such fellowship. It must therefore mean (ἡ κοινωνια) "*the fellowship* of the ministering to the saints."[h] The same word is elsewhere rendered *contribution, distribution, communication,*[i] &c. where it evidently signifies the collection for the support of the poor and other necessary

d 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. e Tit. ii. 3—6. f Eph. iv. 15. g 1 Cor. xiv. 40. h 2 Cor. viii. 4 i Rom. xv. 26. 2 Cor. ix. 13. Heb. xiii. 16.

uses. This is a duty appointed for the first day of the week, when they come together into one place;[k] and the disciples must continue stedfastly in it according to their several abilities, for the poor they have always with them: so the Apostle exhorts, "Of the well-doing and the fellowship be not forgetful; for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased."[l] Some may be apt to look upon this as a carnal ordinance, but the Apostle speaks of it here in very high terms; and he elsewhere calls this communicating of our substance "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."[m]

3. They continued stedfastly *in the breaking of bread.* This expression is sometimes used to signify a common meal; but as the breaking of bread here mentioned is distinguished from their "breaking bread from house to house," * or "eating their meat,"[n] and classed with the other church-ordinan-

* Their breaking bread from house to house, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness (or liberality) of heart, Acts ii. 46. seems to be their *agapæ* or *feasts of charity*, which are afterwards mentioned in 2 Pet. ii. 13. Jude ver. 12. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, distinguishes these feasts from the *Lord's supper* by calling them their *own supper;* and directs them to eat them in their houses along with their poor brethren, whom it seems the more wealthy had neglected or despised, 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21, 22 As these love-feasts were evidently kept by the apostolic churches; as they were calculated to promote love, intimacy, and edification among brethren; as they are no where set aside by revelation, but on the contrary enjoined by the Apostle to be conducted in a right manner; so they ought still to be observed by the churches of Christ.

k 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. l Heb. xiii. 16. m Philip. iv. 14---19. n Acts ii. 46.

ces, it must signify the Lord's Supper, which is afterwards called the breaking of bread by this same historian:[o] and it is so called, because the action of breaking bread is the most significant part of this institution; for Jesus "took bread and brake it, and said, This is my body which is broken for you;"[p] and the Apostle says, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"[q]

The form, nature, and design of this ordinance are best learned from the words of its institution, which we shall collect from the different passages. "The Lord Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed," as they were eating the passover, "took bread and blessed," or "gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given," or "broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this cup is my blood of the new testament (or covenant) which is shed for you,—for many for the remission of sins: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." To which the Apostle adds, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."[r] From these words we may observe,

(1.) That the instituted *signs* in this ordinance are the bread and the cup, or the wine in the cup;

o Acts xx. 7. p 1 Cor. xi. 24. q Chap. x. 16. r Compare Mat. xxvi 26---29. with Mark xiv. 22---25. and Luke xxii. 19---21. and 1 Cor. xi. 23---27.

for it was the fruit of the vine that our Lord gave to his disciples.[s]

2.) The *actions*—1. Of the administrator are exemplified by our Lord. He "took bread, and blessed it," or "gave thanks"—Then he "brake it;" which is a significant action, without which the ordinance would not be complete—and "gave it to the disciples" thus broken.—After this "he took the cup—and gave thanks." Paul calls it the cup of "blessing which we bless;"[t] from which it appears that both blessing and thanksgiving * were used at the taking of the cup, as well as before at taking the bread.—Lastly, he "gave it to them," namely the cup, even as he had done the bread before.—2. The actions of the partakers are implied in those of the administrator, and the words accompanying them, viz. their taking the broken bread, and eating it,—and afterwards the cup, and drinking it, according to the manner prescribed; for it is expressly said, "they all drank of it."[u] But this eating and drinking was not to satisfy the bodily appetite, for it was immediately after a full meal; and the Apostle says, "If any man hunger, let him eat at home."[x]

(3.) The *signification* or *mystery* of these outward signs and actions must be chiefly learned from our

* Some think that (ευλογεω) *to bless*, and (ευχαριστεω) *to give thanks*, signify the same thing in this place; but I apprehend that the former signifies to *pray for a blessing*, and the latter to *express gratitude*, and that both were done in each address.

s Luke xxii. 18. t 1 Cor. x. 16. u Mark xiv. 23.
x 1 Cor. xi. 34.

Lord's words.—1. Of the *bread* he says, "This is *my body*." Not his real body, as the Papists affirm, but the sign, representation, or memorial of his body; for it is usual in scripture to call the sign the thing signified. Thus the paschal lamb is the Lord's passover;[y] the rock in the wilderness is Christ;[z] the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.[a]—It represents his body as *broken*, for he brake the bread before he gave it; and then says, "This is my body broken," i. e. crucified or slain.—It represents it thus broken *for his people;* for he adds, "broken (ὑπερ ὑμων) for you—given for you; i. e. in their stead, on their account, and for their advantage. This points out the vicarious and substitutional nature of his death; and in this view it is every where represented.[b] This broken bread holds him forth as the truth of all the sacrifices and sin-offerings under the law,[c] and in keeping this feast we must view him as our passover sacrificed for us.[d]—2. Of the *cup* he says, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you;" or, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." By the cup he means the wine in the cup, even as the altar is put for the sacrifice offered upon it.[e] This he calls his *blood* by the same figure of speech by which he had called the bread his body, namely, as being the sign or memorial of it.—The cup parti-

y Exod. xii. 11. z 1 Cor. x. 4. a Rev. i. 10. b Isa. liii. 4—7. Rom. v. 6, 8. 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii 13. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. iii. 18. c Heb. x. 1—19. d 1 Cor. v. 7. e Heb. xiii. 10.

cularly represents that part of the sacrifice which made the atonement, as explained in the law, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."[f] So Christ's blood was his life, that by which he made the true atonement; the ransom-price by which he redeemed the souls of his people.[g]—It represents his blood *shed* or (εκχυνομενον) *poured out*, in order to make an atonement; which imports his giving his life; for taking away the life is called "shedding of blood;" and it is said of Christ, that "he POURED OUT his soul unto death."[h] —He says, that his blood was thus shed "for you;" i. e. for the believing partakers—"for many," not only of the Jews, but also for a great multitude out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, even the whole church of the redeemed.[i]—He also declares the end for which it was shed for them, viz. "for the remission of sins." The law gave the knowledge of sin, whilst it manifested that "without shedding of blood there is no remission."[k] This it did by the continual shedding of the blood of animals, which served the double purpose of calling sins to remembrance, and prefiguring the true atoning sacrifice, but could never take away sin. But here the cup imports, that the blood of Christ shed for his guilty people hath obtained a full and everlasting remission of sins. This farther appears from these words, "This is my blood

f Lev. xvii. 11. g 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. h Isa. liii 12.
i Rev. v. 9. k Heb. ix. 22.

of the new testament;" which answer to the words of Moses when he dedicated the old covenant by the sprinkling of blood, "This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you."[l] That old covenant was a figure of the new covenant, and the blood whereby it was dedicated a type of Christ's blood. When the Lord promises to make the new covenant, he contrasts it with the old covenant made at Sinai, and sets forth its excellency by the better promises upon which it is established: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt.—But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."[m] All these promises were ratified upon Christ's blood or sacrifice; but the apostle takes particular notice of the last, viz, the remission of sins; shows that it took place when Christ had by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified; and observes, that where remission of these is there is no more

l Exod. xxiv. 8. Heb. ix. 20. m Jer. xxxi. 32---35. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

offering for sin.[n] Now the cup represents Christ's blood as the blood of this new covenant shed for the remission of sins, and on account of which God remembers them no more. And as it was through the blood of this everlasting covenant that Jesus Christ himself was brought again from the dead to inherit eternal life,[o] so he gives his disciples this cup as a pledge of their participation of that eternal life that is in him.[p]

(4.) The *end* or *design* of this institution is, in general,—1. To keep up the *remembrance* of Christ. So he enjoins them in eating the bread, "This do in remembrance of me;" and in drinking the cup, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." This implies that we are apt to forget him, which, however strange it may seem, is notwithstanding a truth. He knew this, and graciously instituted this ordinance to keep him in our most grateful and affectionate remembrance.—In this ordinance we must remember *who he is*, viz. the Word made flesh, God manifest in the flesh. It is the divine dignity of his person that gives value and efficacy to all that he hath done for the salvation of men; and if we remember not this, we do not remember HIM.—We must remember *what he hath done* for the redemption of sinners, particularly his amazing love in laying down his life for them. In the bread and cup we are to discern his body *broken*, and his blood *shed*, with the great ends of both; and in eating this bread and drinking this cup we "*shew* the Lord's death," i. e. exhibit, declare, and

n Heb. x. 14---19. o Heb. xiii. 20. p John vi. 54

profess it as the foundation of all our hope towards God, making our boast of a crucified Saviour whom the world despise.—We must thus remember and "shew the Lord's death *till he come.*" This implies, that as to his bodily presence he is now absent from us, having gone to the Father; that he will come again to receive his people to himself, that where he is there they may be also; that this ordinance must be observed during his absence, not only in commemoration of his death, but in the prospect and joyful hope of his coming; and that when he comes there will be no farther occasion for this memorial of him.—2. It is intended as a means to assure his disciples of their interest in his death, and of his appearing the second time without a sin-offering unto their salvation. Our Lord did not merely present the bread and cup, assuring them that these were sufficient to feed them; but he actually *gave* them to his disciples, bidding them *eat* the one, and *drink* the other. Nothing can be more closely applied to our bodies, or more appropriated to our own particular use than what we eat and drink; and therefore our spiritually eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood in this ordinance, is more than a general persuasion that Christ's death is sufficient to save whom he will; it can be no less than a belief of our own particular interest in his death, and a joying in God through him, by whom we have now received the atonement. But we are not left to argue this from analogy; for Christ expressly tells his disciples when he gives them the bread to eat and the cup to drink, "This is my body BROKEN

FOR YOU—This is the "new covenant in my blood which is SHED FOR YOU." These words are addressed to the believing partakers; and if their faith answers to that which is spoken, they must know that his body was broken and his blood shed, not only for the elect in general, but for themselves in particular. When they perceive and believe the *sufficiency* of Christ's death to reconcile them to God, it frees them from every perplexing question as to the ground of hope, and excites their supreme desire to be found in Christ, having the righteousness which is of God by faith; but this hunger and thirst after righteousness is never fully satisfied till they believe Christ's words, that his body was broken and his blood shed *for them*. In the belief of this the meek eat and are satisfied; they feast with God on the sacrifice of his beloved Son as sacrificed for them, and have fellowship with Christ by the Spirit in the enjoyment of the Father's love, drinking the fruit of the vine new with him in his Father's kingdom.[s] This excites their love to God and to one another; and makes them look forward with joyful hope and earnest desire for the second coming of Christ, knowing that he will appear for their salvation. And thus they shew the Lord's death till he come.

In order to partake of this ordinance aright, and enjoy the comfort intended by it, the apostle directs the Corinthians to self-examination: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."[r] He must examine him-

q Mat. xxvi. 29 r 1 Cor. xi. 28.

self whether he be in the *faith*,[s] without which he has no right to that ordinance, cannot discern the Lord's body, or feast upon his sacrifice.[t]—He must examine himself as to his *love* to the brethren. If a church come together in divisions or schisms, "this is not to eat the Lord's supper."[u] They cannot really feast upon Christ as their passover sacrificed for them, unless they "purge out the old leaven," and keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of *malice* and *wickedness*: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."[x] And this is true of every individual as well as of the church in general.—He must examine himself as to the *fruits* of love, how he bears his brethren's burdens, and so fulfils the law of Christ, which is the law of brotherly love; concerning which the Apostle exhorts, "Let every man prove his own works, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."[y] But this duty of self-examination as to brotherly love cannot take place but among those who appear to one another to be of the truth. If there be any among them who have not this appearance, they cannot love them for the truth's sake, consequently cannot examine themselves as to their love to such, and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup with them, which is the symbol of love and union. The only remedy in this case is, what the Apostle prescribes to the churches in that of the incestuous person, viz. to purge out the old leaven by

s 2 Cor. xiii. 5. t 1 Cor. xi. 29 John vi. 35, 36.
u 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20. x 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. y Gal vi. 2---5.

discipline, that they may be a new lump, and so keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth ;[z] which they cannot do while they either eat in divisions among themselves, or in connection with impenitent offenders and visible unbelievers.

When the Apostle says, "AS OFTEN as ye eat this bread and drink this cup," &c. he intimates, that this ordinance must be often celebrated ; and the expressions, "when ye come together in the church," and "when ye come together into one place—to eat the Lord's supper,"[a] plainly import, that one main end of their coming together was to observe this ordinance. And if it be asked, how often they assembled for that purpose? the example of the church at Troas will solve this question : "Upon the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, when the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD."[b] If this passage proves that the first churches statedly assembled for worship *every* first day of the week, as is generally admitted, it proves still clearer that it was for the purpose of breaking bread. Accordingly, we find that the church at Jerusalem continued as stedfastly in the breaking of bread as in the other social ordinances of divine worship.[c] And if we only consider the nature and ends of this comfortable institution, it cannot well be conceived how any real Christian should object to its frequency, or think it either burdensome or improper to observe it every Lord's day.

The Lord's supper does not, like baptism, belong

z 1 Cor. v. 5---9.
b Acts xx. 7.
a Chap. xi. 18, 20, 33.
c Acts ii. 42.

to *single individuals* by themselves; for it is an ordinance of visible communion. Nor does it belong to a number of disciples occasionally meeting, and not properly united or set in order; nor to parts of a church meeting in different places; but only to a church regularly constituted as a visible body, with its proper pastors, and coming statedly together into one place to eat it. The bread and cup are the communion, or joint participation, of the body and blood of Christ; and as the bread is one, so the many who all partake of that one bread must be one visible body.[d] And this body is described as organized like the complete body of a man, and furnished with all the necessary parts for performing the various offices.[e]

4. They continued stedfastly *in the prayers*. Prayer is an address presented unto God in the name of Christ, the great High-priest and Advocate, through whose mediation alone there is access unto the throne of grace with acceptance. It consists of adoration and praise of his matchless excellencies, confession of our guilt and unworthiness before him, petitions for every needful blessing agreeable to his will, and thanksgiving for all his benefits. This is the duty of Christians every where and in every situation,[f] who are enjoined to continue instant in prayer and to watch thereunto with all perseverance;[g] and to this persevering importunity our Lord gives the highest encouragement.[h] As there can be no vital Christi-

d 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. e Chap. xii. f 1 Tim. ii. 8. Philip. iv. 6.
g Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18. h Luke xi. 1---14. and xviii. 1---9.

anity without the Spirit of grace and supplication; so the liveliness or languor of a man's soul in the spiritual life may be measured by the degree of his delight in, or aversion from this duty. Prayer is not only a secret and private duty, but a most important branch of public worship, as appears from the passage under consideration. And as prayers are mentioned in the plural, there must have been a number of them put up at every meeting of the church; and it is probable they were distributed or interspersed among the other parts of divine service. The pastors are distinguished from the deacons by their giving themselves to prayer as well as to the ministry of the word;[i] and no doubt there were particular public prayers peculiar to them; such as the eucharistical prayers at the Lord's supper, the binding and loosing prayers in discipline, &c. But it does not appear that all the prayers in the public assembly were put up by the pastors only. The hundred and twenty disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication when met together;[k] the three thousand who were added to them also continued stedfastly in the same divine exercise;[l] and the apostles often gave directions to the members of the churches, as well with respect to their public and social as private prayers.[m] We cannot suppose that nothing more is meant by all this, than their saying *Amen* to the prayers of their teachers,[n] or their repeating prayers

i Acts vi. 4. k Chap. i. 14. l Chap. ii. 42. m Rom. xii. 12. 1 Cor. xi. 4. and xiv. 14. Eph. vi. 18. 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, 3, 8 James v. 16. Jude ver. 20. n 1 Cor. xiv. 16

after them.* It plainly intimates, that the prayers of the brethren had a place in the public worship of the church. The particular manner of conducting this part of divine service is indeed not recorded in scripture; but as they could not all pray audibly at once without confusion, unless they had common forms of prayer, which the scriptures do not countenance; so it seems most agreeable to the general rule of decency and order to suppose, that the president called forth such a number of the brethren to pray in succession as the time allotted for that branch of worship would permit.

5. Lastly, *Singing praise to God* in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, is another branch of public worship. When our Lord instituted the Supper as the standing memorial of his sacrifice, he sung an hymn with his disciples on that occasion.[n] Paul gives directions to the church at Corinth as well with re-

* The practice of repeating prayers after the presbyter did not take place in the apostolic age, though it seems to have been introduced very early. See *Justin Martyr, apolog.* 2. p. 98. Yet in Cyprian's time the brethren prayed audibly in the church; for he admonishes them as follows: "When therefore we come together with our brethren into the assembly, to celebrate the divine sacrifices with the minister of God, we ought to be mindful of order and a reverend regard; and not to throw about our prayers with a wild and confused voice, or with a disorderly prating, to cast forth these petitions which ought with the greatest modesty to be put up to God." *Cyprian. de Orat. Dom.* p. 188.

It cannot be shown that the churches used any set forms of prayer during the first three centuries, except the Lord's prayer. See *King's Enquiry into the constitution, discipline, unity, and worship of the primitive church*, p. 33---43

n Mat. xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26.

gard to their social singing as other parts of divine service ;[o] and in his epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, he expressly inculcates this duty: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."[p] "Be ye filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."[q] We cannot sing with grace in our hearts unless "the word of Christ dwell in us richly," and we be "filled with the Spirit." Those who through the Spirit believe the gospel of the grace of God, are furnished with the most solid grounds of thankfulness, gratitude, and joy; and singing is not only the natural expression of these happy and devout affections, but also the appointed means of exciting and strengthening them. This delightful duty is to be performed "unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," who hath approached unto God in the name of all his brethren with acceptance, and officiates as the minister of the heavenly sanctuary; where he leads the worship of the whole general assembly and church of the first-born, declaring his Father's name unto his brethren, and in the midst of the church singing praise unto him.[r] It is only through his merits and mediation that our prayers

o 1 Cor. xiv. 15, 26. p Col iii. 16. q Eph. v. 18, 19, 20. r Heb. ii. 12.

and praises come up before God with acceptance; and it is "by him" we are to "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, (ὁμολογοῦντες) confessing to his name."[s] The whole redeemed company are also represented as celebrating in songs of praise the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed them unto God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;[t] and it well becomes the churches of the saints upon earth, who represent this grand worshipping assembly, to join in the song, saying, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."[u]

Thus I have endeavoured to point out some of the principal things which the apostles, according to their commission, taught the disciples to observe; and "blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."[x]

s Heb. xiii. 15.
t Rev. v. 9. 14.
u Chap. i. 5, 6.
x Chap. xxii. 14.

## THE PROMISE.

*—And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*

1. THIS encouraging promise was no doubt made in the first place to his apostles, and has a particular respect to the commission he had just given them, which was the most important and arduous work that ever was assigned to any of the human race. When the Lord commissioned Moses to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, he encouraged him by this promise, "Certainly I will be WITH THEE."[y] The same promise he repeatedly made to Joshua when he commissioned him to subdue the Canaanites, and lead Israel into the promised possession; "As I was with Moses, so I will be WITH THEE: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee—Have not I commanded thee? Be strong, and of a good courage, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is WITH THEE whithersoever thou goest."[z] This promise imports, that his special presence would attend them; and that he would give them effectual direction, protection, assistance, and success in the discharge of their mission.

The redemption of Israel from Egyptian bondage, and putting them in possession of the promised inhe-

y Exod. iii. 12. z Josh. i. 5, 9.

ritance, was a great and important work; nothing but the out-stretched arm of Jehovah could accomplish it, and accordingly it is every where ascribed to him;[a] but the redemption by Jesus Christ is infinitely more important and glorious. The commission given to Moses and his successor respected only one particular nation; but that given to the apostles respected all nations. The former had for its object an earthly temporal deliverance: the latter a spiritual and eternal; they being sent to "open the eyes" of men in every nation, "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in Christ."[b] This was a work infinitely transcending all created power: but the promise of Jesus, "Lo, I am with you alway," &c. was sufficient to answer every objection arising from the consciousness of their own inability; for they could do all things through the strength of him who has all power in heaven and in earth.

His bodily presence indeed was not to continue with them; for he was then just about to enter into his glory, and the heavens must receive him until the times of restitution of all things.[c] He had told them before that he would soon leave them and go to the Father,[d] where he would still be mindful of their interest, as he was going to prepare a place for them in his Father's house; and that he would after a certain period return in person and receive them

a Exod. xx. 2. Deut. vii. 19. Psal. xliv. 3. b Acts xxvi. 17, 18.
c Chap. iii. 21. d John xiv. 28. and xvi. 5, 6, 16, 18.

to himself, when he and they should never more part.[e] In the mean time, he assures them, that he would not leave them (ορφανες) orphans, but would send them another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, who should abide with them for ever;[f] and this is what he principally intends in the promise annexed to the commission. This promise was most remarkably accomplished to the apostles and first preachers of the word; for,

(1.) By his Spirit he enlightened their minds in the subject-matter of their mission, and fully instructed them in the mysteries of the kingdom. While he was with them in the world, he was continually teaching them; but they were slow of heart to receive his instructions. They neither properly understood the ends of his death and resurrection, nor the nature of his kingdom.[g] Just before he suffered, he tells them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" and then refers them to the time when they should be fully taught by the Spirit; "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself,* but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify

* This does not mean that the Spirit should not speak any thing of his own work, as some explain it; but only that he should not speak uncommissioned; even as Christ says, "I have not spoken of myself," John xii. 49.---"the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself," chap. xiv. 10.

e John xiv. 1---4. f Ver. 16---19. g Mat. xvi. 12. Mark ix. 10. Acts i. 6.

me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."[h]—"He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."[i] Accordingly when the Holy Spirit was poured down upon them from their glorified Master, their remaining ignorance and prejudices were dispelled, and the light of the glorious gospel broke in upon their minds like a flood of day.[k] The things which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor had entered into the heart of man, were now revealed unto them by the Spirit, which searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; so that they had the mind of Christ,[l] and were fully qualified to declare unto the world the whole counsel of God.[m] This change was so exceedingly remarkable and striking, that it astonished all who heard them.[n] Their doctrine was so unlike any thing that had ever entered into the human mind;—so opposite not only to all the lusts, wickedness, and impiety of the profane world, but even to what was most highly esteemed among men;—so worthy of God, manifestative of his true character, and conducive to his honour;—so well adapted to the ruinous state of man, and suited to give relief to his mind in the fullest view of his own guilt and wretchedness; as clearly evidenced it to be a revelation from heaven, and equally surpassing the wisdom of the most learned to contrive it, as that of the poor illiterate mechanics who published it.

(2.) He was with them in giving testimony to the word of his grace, and granting signs and wonders

h John xvi. 12, 13, 14. i Chap. xiv. 26. k 2 Cor. iv. 6.
l 1 Cor. ii. 9. 10, 16. m Acts xx. 27. n Chap. ii. 5---13.

to be done by their hands for the confirmation of their doctrine to the world.[o] This he had formerly promised: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these; because I go to the Father," viz. to send the Spirit for that purpose. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."[p] The apostles accordingly performed the most astonishing miracles in proof of their testimony, the least of which was as much above their own ability as the creation of the world. And indeed they disclaimed all their own power and holiness in performing these works, and ascribed them solely to the name of the risen Jesus, and the power of the Spirit of God which he had given them.[q]

(3.) He was with them in strengthening, supporting, and encouraging them to speak the word with all boldness and freedom in the face of every danger. He had frequently forewarned them of the opposition and persecution which they should meet with from the world on his account.[r] "They shall lay their hands on you (says he,) and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake—and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."[s] The disciples were no way remarkable for natural firmness or courage. When their Master was apprehended, they

o Acts xiv. 3.
p John xiv. 12, 13. Mark xvi. 17, 18.
q Acts iii. 12---17. and ix. 34. Rom. xv. 18, 19. Heb. ii. 4.
r John xv. 18---22. and xvi. 2, 3.
s Luke xxi. 12, 16, 17.

all forsook him and fled like timorous sheep, and were scattered every man to his own ;[t] even Peter, the most forward and intrepid of them, through fear denied him with imprecations and oaths.[u] It is evident, therefore, that their natural fortitude was not equal to the dangers and sufferings to which their commission exposed them. But no sooner were they endued with power from on high, than they became bold as lions. When they were brought before kings and rulers, the Lord stood with them and strengthened them ;[x] and, as he had promised, gave them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist :[y] it was given them in that same hour what they should speak ; for it was not they who spake, but the Spirit of their Father that spake in them.[z] And as they were furnished with matter, so they declared it with boldness and freedom in the face of their greatest enemies. Neither threats, nor stripes, nor imprisonment, nor even the prospect of death itself, could intimidate them, nor cause them to desist ;[a] for they were now superior to the fear of them who can only kill the body. "None of these things (says Paul) move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."[b] They not only bore their sufferings with patience and fortitude, but even with joy and triumph, "rejoicing that they were counted

t Mat. xxvi. 56. John xvi. 32. u Mat. xxvi. 74. x 2 Tim. iv. 17.
y Luke xxi. 15. z Mat. x. 19, 20. a Acts iv. and v. b Chap. xx. 24.

worthy to suffer shame for his name,"[c] and the more they suffered for Christ, the more abundantly did they receive of the consolations of his Spirit: "For (says the Apostle) as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."[d]

(4.) He was with them in giving success and effect to their ministry. It has already been shown,* that, during the days of the apostles, the gospel was published throughout the greater part of the known world, and, what is more remarkable, was crowned with amazing success. This success was not owing to the natural abilities or human advantages of its publishers. They were not the wise men, scribes, and disputers of this world, nor the mighty and noble, whose eloquence, power, or dignity, might be supposed to have influence. On the contrary, they were, in a worldly view, the foolish, weak, base, and despised,[e] and were held and treated as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things.[f] Nor was it owing to the agreement of their doctrine with the sentiments, dispositions, or practices of mankind; for they neither humoured their prejudices, flattered their pride, nor hung out the worldly baits of riches, pleasures, or honours to allure them. The doctrine of Christ crucified cut off the earthly expectations of the Jews, and set at nought all their boasted distinction in point of righteousness; while it condemned the

* See page 24. of this book.

c Acts v. 41. d 2 Cor. i. 5. e 1 Cor. i. 26, 27, 28. f Chap iv. 13.

idolatry and vain philosophy of the Gentiles, and was in all respects opposite to the course of this evil world, whether religious or profane; so that it was "unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."[g] The consequence was such as might be expected; it was every where spoken against.[h] The apostles, in publishing it, had to encounter all the moral depravity of the human heart, its gross ignorance, inveterate prejudices, corrupt reasonings, malignant passions, and worldly lusts; they had to sustain the outward opposition arising from the influence of priests and false teachers, the wisdom of philosophers, the power of princes, and the intrigues of states; and all these instigated and set on by the god of this world;[i] for they wrestled not merely "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."[k] Now, can it be rationally supposed, that a few weak, illiterate, mean men, and by means of a doctrine so obnoxious, should, without any supernatural assistance, be able to baffle every opposition, and be a match for the whole world with Satan at its head? Surely no. Their success must be resolved entirely into the power of Christ, who had promised to be with them. And to this the apostles themselves always ascribed it, whilst they gloried in their own weakness, that the power of Christ might rest upon them, and be the more con-

g 1 Cor. i. 23.
h Acts xxvi. 22.
i 2 Cor. iv. 4.
k Eph. vi. 12.

spicuously magnified in them.[l] "We have this treasure (says Paul) in earthen vessels;" and the reason he gives is, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."[m] The like reason he gives for their manner of preaching it: "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom—that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."[n] He shows that it was only through divine power they overcame all the opposition of the hearts of men: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty THROUGH GOD to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations (or reasonings,) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."[o] Thus we have seen how Christ was with his apostles. But,

2. This promise must not be restricted to the apostles, or to men so qualified, as I have already shown;* for he says, "Lo, I am with you alway," or (πασας τας ἡμερας) all the days, "EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD." The apostles were not to continue their personal ministry all the days from Christ's ascension to his second coming at the end of the world; nor was the work of making disciples, baptizing and teaching to cease at their death. Christ hath instituted the standing ministry of pastors and teachers in his church unto the end of time, and they

* See page 13.

l 2 Cor. xii. 9, 10. m 2 Cor. iv. 7. n 1 Cor. ii. 1—6. o 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

are supposed to be acting as stewards over his house when he comes.[p] This promise therefore extends to all succeeding ordinary teachers whom he calls to that work, and who in their sphere shall faithfully execute this commission, according to the doctrine and example of the apostles, even unto the end of the world. And it imports, that he will be with them to qualify them for that important office, and to protect, counsel, assist, and give success to them in the discharge of it; and so he is represented as holding the stars, or angels of the churches, in his right hand.[q] This promise is well calculated to support the minds of Christ's ministers under every discouragement which may arise from the weight and importance of their charge, the sense of their own weakness and insufficiency, and the opposition which they must necessarily encounter in the faithful discharge of their office, not only from the world, but also from the remainder of corruption in their own brethren. For if Christ be with them, no work he calls them to perform can be too hard for them; no opposition can be successful against them. The belief of this must lift them above themselves, and lead them to act in his strength, and to depend upon him alone for success. But it ought to be carefully noticed, that as this promise is annexed to the commission, and made to the apostles in the first instance, so no succeeding teachers have any ground to expect that Christ will be with them, but in so far as they preach the ancient gospel, and teach the disci-

p Luke xii. 41---45. q Rev. i. 16, 20.

ples to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded, according to the doctrine and example of the apostles, as recorded in the writings of the New Testament.

3. Lastly, This promise is made not only to his faithful ministers, but also to the whole body of his redeemed church in this world. The end of the commission, as well as of all the gifts necessary for executing it, was to gather and edify his church. His giving "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;" was "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."[r] He commanded his apostles, as they loved him, to feed his sheep and lambs;[s] and elders are enjoined "to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood."[t] All gifts and ministries were conferred upon his church; "for all things are yours (says the Apostle,) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas—all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."[u] As therefore it was entirely for the benefit of his church that he appointed teachers, conferred gifts upon them, and assigned them their work, so his promise of being with these teachers is in effect a promise of being with his church.

Many are the promises in the word of God to this effect. Speaking of his church under the notion of a vineyard, he says, "I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.[x] All the labourers he hath put

r Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12. s John xxi. 15---18. t Acts xx. 28.
u 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22, 23. x Isa. xxvii. 3.

into his vineyard would have no effect without this; for "neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."[y]—His church is his building or temple, with respect to which he hath promised, "Upon this rock (viz. which Peter confessed) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" for it is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord."[z] In this temple he takes up his residence; for he hath said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;"[a] and so he is represented as walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and holding the stars in his right hand.[b] He is among them to guide, refresh, and protect them; for the Lord hath promised to "create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain."[c]—When his church is compared to a flock of sheep, the promise is "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with

y 1 Cor. iii. 7. z Mat. xvi. 18. Eph. ii. 20, 21. a 1 Cor. vi. 16.
b Rev. ii. 1. c Isa. iv. 5, 6. and xxxii. 2.

young."[d] Agreeably to this he says, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.—I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.—My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."[e]—His church is his kingdom; and it is promised that he whose "name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father (or Father of the age to come,) The Prince of Peace," shall have the government of it upon his shoulder; and that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever."[f] This promise is repeated by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin, and applied to Jesus her son; "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."[g]

d Isa. xl. 11.
e John x. 9, 11, 27, 28, 29, 30.
f Isa. ix. 6, 7.
g Luke i. 31, 32, 33.

*Christ's promise imports the fulfilment of all the prophecies and promises relating to his kingdom, even unto the end of the world.*

CHRIST'S promise of being with his church was not exhausted in the first ages of Christianity, but extends through all succeeding ages, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. To this it will perhaps be objected, that there is scarcely any appearance of the fulfilment of this promise in the succeeding history of what is called the church, it being mostly taken up with an account of the growth and prevalence of a system of universal corruption, replete with deceit, superstition, idolatry and tyranny, and in all respects the reverse of the holy, merciful and heavenly religion of Christ which is taught in the New Testament.

In answer to this let it be observed, that whatever were the wise and holy ends of divine Providence in permitting such evils to spring up under a profession of Christianity, yet the worst of them which history can relate was clearly foretold in the word of God. They were all foreseen by Christ when he gave this promise, and he has actually revealed them in opening the sealed book; so that the history of these corruptions is just an account of the fulfilment of prophecy, which, instead of staggering, ought to confirm our faith. It should farther be observed, that amidst all these sad and disordered scenes held forth in prophecy, and now realized in history, so far as it goes, Christ is always represented as with his church, (i. e.

those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus) preserving them from the universal corruption, and supporting them under all their conflicts and sufferings; and, which fully obviates the objection, the united voice of prophecy assures us, that his kingdom shall at last universally prevail and triumph over all opposition. But these things require a more particular consideration.

In the book of Daniel there are two prophetic representations of four successive monarchies or universal kingdoms, viz. the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.[k] During the last of these monarchies the kingdom of the Messiah was to be set up :* "And in the days of these kings (or kingdoms) shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which never shall be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."[l]

This kingdom of God in its beginning was to be small and despised. It is represented as a stone cut out of the mountain without hands.[m] Christ himself compares it to a grain of mustard seed, and to a little leaven,[n] and says, "The kingdom of God

* This kingdom commenced when reconciliation was made for iniquity and the most holy anointed, and this was to be at the end of seventy prophetic weeks, or 490 years, reckoning from the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus (B. C. 457.) when he gave forth the commandment to Ezra for restoring the church and state of the Jews, Dan. ix. 24, 25, 26. Ezra vii.

k Dan. ii. vii.
l Chap. ii. 44.
m Chap. ii. 45.
n Mat. xiii. 31, 32, 33.

cometh not with observation,"[o] i. e. with worldly pomp or outward shew. And though it was gradually to increase, and at last to prevail and fill the whole earth;[p] yet its sufferings and conflicts were to continue for a long period of time. Throughout the greater part of the apocalyptic visions the kingdom of Christ is represented as in a state of depression and tribulation. While he rules in the midst of his enemies, his kingdom and patience will still be connected together:[q] His subjects must therefore lay their account with conformity to him in his humbled, despised and suffering condition in this world, until Satan is bound, and all opposing powers subdued.[r] Yet in this situation they have sufficient encouragement from his promise that he will be with them always, to preserve and support them amidst all the assaults of Satan and his instruments; making his grace sufficient for them, and his strength perfect in weakness.[s] They may indeed be "troubled on every side, but not distressed (i. e. straitened or shut up without resource;) perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed,"[t]—"because greater is he that is in them than he that is in the world."[u]

Satan's first attack upon the kingdom of Christ was by means of the Jewish church, and its rulers, who both killed the Lord Jesus himself, and persecuted his followers.[x] Their design was to have stifled the

o Luke xvii. 20. p Dan. ii. 34, 35. q Rev. i. 9. r Chap. xix. 19, 20, 21. chap. xx. 2, 3. s 2 Cor. xii. 9. t 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9. u 1 John iv. 4. x Luke xxi. 12, 16. Acts viii. 1--5. 1 Thess. ii. 14.

cause in its very birth; but he that sitteth in the heavens laughed at their vain attempts, and so overruled their rage as to make it subservient to the redemption of mankind,[y] and the spread of the gospel:[z] and in less than forty years after, he executed the most signal vengeance upon that people by means of the Roman armies, who destroyed those murderers and burnt up their city, as he had clearly foretold,[a] and as their own historian minutely relates.[b] This was the entire abolition of the Jewish church and state; the most awful revolution in all the religious dispensations of God, and which in various ways contributed much to the success of the gospel. Their posterity have ever since been dispersed among the nations, and continue unto this day distinct from all other people, as a standing monument of the divine displeasure, as well as of the truth of the Christian faith.

The next power which opposed the kingdom of Christ was the pagan Roman empire, which is represented as a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads,*

* This monstrous dragon is a fit emblem of the Roman empire. Its *red* colour fitly represents the imperial purple and the bloody cruelty of those who wore it. Its *seven heads* are explained to be the seven mountains upon which Rome the imperial city stood, Rev. xvii. 9. and also seven kings, ver. 10. or seven kinds of supreme magistrates which successively prevailed there, viz. kings, consuls, decemvirs, military tribunes, dictators, emperors, &c.---Its *ten horns* are ten kings, ver. 12. or ten independent kingdoms into which the

y Acts ii. 23. Rom. iv. 23.
a Mat. xxii. 7. chap. xxiv.
z Acts viii. 4. chap xi. 19---22.
b Joseph de bell. Jud. lib. v. vi. vii.

and is called the devil and Satan,[c] because Satan acted in and by that power even as he did in the serpent which beguiled Eve. This opposition was carried on for near three centuries in a series of bloody persecutions, and the chief accusation against the Christians was their non-conformity or opposition to the established idolatry. Yet all that power and policy which had conquered the world could not subdue the faithful and patient followers of the Lamb. On the contrary, they overcame their accusers, not with carnal weapons, but "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."[d] This conflict issued in the overthrow and punishment of the heathen persecuting powers, and in the downfal of the pagan religion in the empire, which is described at the opening of the sixth seal in such strong figures as if it were the dissolution of the world, and the arrival of the great day of judgment.[e] The same thing is repre-

empire was at last broken and divided; yet they became united in their implicit subjection to the Roman hierarchy, to which they gave their power and strength, ver. 12, 13.----The heads of the dragon were successive, ver. 10, but its horns cotemporary, ver. 12.---- While the empire continued united, the *crowns* were upon its *heads*, chap. xii. 3. but when it was broken into ten independent kingdoms the crowns were transferred to its *horns*, chap. xiii. 1. Let it be observed, that though in prophetic pictures the whole piece may be exhibited at once, yet it frequently happens that many of the parts succeed each other in a chronological series, as is the case with the image, Dan. ii.

c Rev. xii. 9. d Chap. xii. 10, 11. e Chap. vi. 12, ad ult.

sented by a war in heaven between Michael and his angels and the dragon and his angels, in which the latter prevailed not, but was cast down from that high station in which he persecuted the church.[f] This was accomplished when the ruling powers and their adherents, who supported idolatry, were routed and overcome by Constantine, and when he suppressed paganism, and established in the empire a form of Christianity in its stead, about the year 325.

Under the reigns of Constantine and his successors, the professors of Christianity enjoyed outward peace for about seventy years.[g] But during this period Satan exerted himself in another and more effectual way for the ruin of genuine Christianity; for when the heathen emperors were taken out of the way, when paganism was suppressed, a form of Christianity established in its place, and its teachers exalted to power and opulence, then the mystery of iniquity which began to work in the churches even in the apostolic age,[h] and had been gradually increasing ever since, came now to a great height. The primitive purity and simplicity of the Christian faith and worship were greatly corrupted by vain philosophy, heresies and superstition, and the heathen worship of demons was only exchanged for that of departed saints.[i] The constitution, discipline, union and order of the apostolic churches were now entirely subverted by

f Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9. g Chap. viii. 1. h 2 Thess. ii. 7. i 1 Tim. iv. 1.

the union of church and state, and by bringing the nations, through worldly power and influence, under a corrupted form of Christianity, and subjecting them to a covetous and ambitious clergy, who exercised authority over this motly mass like lords of the Gentiles, and contended among themselves who should be the greatest. Yet while the Christian emperors held the supreme power in the empire, this growing evil did not arrive at its full height.

During this state of things Christ was not unmindful of his promise: The true servants of God who mourned over these abominations, were distinguished by him from the false professors with whom they were mixed; and to secure and preserve them from the strong delusions, as well as awful judgments, that were coming upon the outward state of Christianity and its carnal professors who received not the love of the truth,[k] they are represented as sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads,[l] alluding to what is said in the prophecy of Ezekiel on a similar occasion.[m] The true servants of God being thus secured, the power which patronized and accelerated the corruption of Christianity soon began to be visited by dreadful calamities. The barbarous nations broke in upon the empire like an overflowing flood, and by successive devastations, slaughter and conquest, wasted and tore it in pieces, and at last overturned its imperial form of government in the West, A. D.

k 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, 11, 12. l Rev. vii. 2---13. m Ezek. ix. 4---8.

476.* These severe judgments are represented under strong prophetic figures at the sounding of the first four trumpets.[n]

It might have been expected that the barbarous heathen nations which were the instruments of these awful judgments, would have subverted the religious as well as civil government of the empire: but the case was far otherwise. The conquerors submitted to the religion of the conquered, which by this time differed little from heathen superstition and idolatry, except in names; and however much these invading powers differed among themselves in other respects, yet all of them at length, partly through delusion, and partly from political views, agreed in one mind to "give their power and strength unto the beast,[o] i. e. unto the hierarchy

* Immediately after the death of the emperor Theodosius, A. D. 395. the Goths under Alaric began their irruptions: they ravaged Greece and Italy, took and plundered Rome, and also burnt part of it, A. D. 410. After this the Hunns under Attila wasted Thrace, Macedon, Greece, Italy, &c. by slaughter, burning and pillage for the space of fourteen years, ending about A. D. 452. Next the Vandals, under the command of Genseric, took and plundered Rome for fourteen days together, A. D. 455. and reduced the state to such a weak condition as to become an easy prey to the next invader. Accordingly, about twenty years after, Odoacer king of the Heruli came to Rome with an army, deposed the emperor Momyllus (called Augustulus) divested him of the imperial robes, and, causing himself to be proclaimed king of Italy, put an end to the very name of the western empire, A. D. 476. Theodoric about seventeen years after overthrew Odoacer, and established the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, which continued about sixty years. Justinian extirpated the Gothic kingdom, and Italy became for some time a province of the eastern empire, when Rome was reduced to a poor dukedom, and made subject to the Exarch of Ravenna, A. D. 566.

n Rev. viii. 7—13. o Chap. xvii. 12, 13.

of Rome headed by the Pope,* whose supremacy, tyranny, idolatry, and superstition they supported and defended with their riches, arms and authority. By this means the Roman Pontiff gradually rose to the summit of power, and the empire, now di-

* To what other power can we possibly apply the various prophetic emblems and characters by which this dreadful monster is represented and described? Not to heathen Rome, though it might possess some of the characters; for this is a pretended *religious power*, being that man of sin who "as God sitteth in the temple (or church) of God, shewing himself that he is God," and who was to be revealed when the imperial head of the empire should be taken out of the way, 2 Thess. ii. 4, 6, 7.----It is that *little horn* in Daniel which sprung up among the ten horns or kingdoms into which the fourth or Roman monarchy was at last divided, which had eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, Dan. vii. 7, 8. Rev. xiii. 5.---It is that *great whore* who rides the scarlet coloured beast with the sever fallen heads and ten horns; or who governs and directs the Roman empire in its last state when divided into ten kingdoms, Rev. xvii. 3, 10, 12. which give their power and strength to her, ver. 13.---It is a conjunction of usurped *spiritual* and *secular* power, and so is represented as a beast having *two horns like a lamb*, pretending to have his spiritual authority from Christ the Lamb of God, as his vicar upon earth; but *speaks as a dragon*, assuming the highest tone of civil authority, and acting in the spirit of a secular tyrant, as the genuine successor of the heathen Cæsars, Rev. xiii. 11.----Its *seat of government* is that great city which is seated on seven mountains, and which in John's time reigned over the kings of the earth, Rev. xvii. 9, 18. which is well known to be the seven-hilled imperial city of Rome. It must therefore be a Roman power, but not in its pagan state, nor while the empire was united under the Cæsarean government; for this beast which now represents the Roman empire, has its ten horns crowned, Rev. xiii. 1. being divided into ten independent kingdoms, yet still united as one beast though under another form. And this beast is not the dragon, but his successor; for "the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority," ver. 2. But no power has ever had the throne and authority of the dragon in Rome since the empire was divided except the Romish papacy.----"Power was given him to continue."

vided into ten kingdoms, came in a sort to be reunited under him, as its supreme head, both in matters civil and ecclesiastical.

This is that man of sin whose coming was foretold to be "after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness."[p] And though the elect were secured from his deceptions, yet the carnal multitudes, nations and tongues going under the Christian name, were, in the righteous judgment of God, given up to the influence of his strong delusions that they should believe a lie, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.[q] The satanic pride, tyranny and blasphemous pretensions of this power are also foretold: he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped:"[r] claiming dominion not only over kings and emperors in civil matters,[s] but also over the consciences of men in matters of faith and worship; opposing his authority to, and even exalting it above that of God himself over his

or rather (ποιησαι) to practise or prosper, "forty and two months," Rev. xiii. 5. which is 1260 years; but the heathen Roman empire did not subsist 300 years after the date of this prophecy.----*Deceit* or the arts of *strong delusions* is another characteristic of this power by which it stands distinguished from heathen Rome, 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. Rev. xiii. 13. 14. chap. xviii. 23. and in those characters wherein there is a resemblance it greatly exceeds, such as its pride and luxury, blasphemy, superstition, idolatry, tyranny, intolerance and cruelty.

p 2 Thess. ii. 3, 9. Rev. xiii. 13, 14. q 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11. Rev. xiii. 3, 4, 8. r 2 Thess. ii. 4. Dan. vii. 25. Rev. xiii. 5, 6. s Rev. xvii. 18.

house, by making void his truths and laws, and with an high hand imposing his own decrees, superstition and idolatry in their place;[t] "so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God."[u] This power was the most subtle, dangerous and cruel adversary to the church of Christ that had ever yet appeared. It is the mystery of all the ancient enemies of God's people, and the sink of all the abominations of the earth,[x] which under a corrupted profession of Christianity, and by all manner of deceit and violence, supported by the kings of the earth, made war with the Lamb, and they that were with him, the called, and chosen, and faithful.[y]

As to the duration of this power we are told, that (εξουσια) "authority was given unto him (ποιησαι) to practise forty and two months,[z] which in prophetic language signifies 1260 years, reckoning each month 30 days, and taking each day for a year.* This is not the whole time of his exist-

* In Daniel it is expressed, "until a time and times, and the dividing of time," chap. vii. 25. or "for a time, times and an half," chap. xii. 7. as also in Rev. xii. 14. A *time* is a year, *times* two years, and *an half*, or *the dividing of time*, is half a year, making in whole three years and an half, which is 42 months, as here and in chap. xi. 2. and 42 months of 30 days each make 1260 days, as in chap. xi. 3. and chap. xii. 6. So that taking each day for a year, according to Num. xiv. 34. Ezek. iv. 6. it is 1260 years, or 1242 Julian years. As the man of sin rose to his throne by different steps, it is not easy to fix precisely the commencement of this period. His reign could not begin before the Cæsarean head of the Roman empire was wounded to death, Rev. xii. 3. and he who was the obstacle was taken out of the way, 2 Thess

t Rev. xiii. 12, 16. 17. chap. xvii. 1---7. u 2 Thess. ii. 4. x Rev. xi. 8. y Rev. xiii. 7. chap. xvii. 14. z Chap. xiii. 5.

ence, but of his reign, when he should with authority practise, prosper or prevail.[a]

During this long and dismal period, the woman or true church retires into the wilderness from the face of the serpent,* and continues in that obscure retreat 1260 days, i. e. years,[b] making no open appearance in her proper form and order as she did formerly in the churches of the saints: for this is the time when the court without the temple, or outward profession of Christianity is not to be measured by the rule of God's word, but given to the nations falsely assuming the Christian name, who profane it with their heathenish superstition and idolatry, and tread the holy city under foot

ii. 6, 7. It must have begun in the last state of Daniel's fourth monarchy when divided into ten kingdoms; for this power was to spring up as a little horn among the ten kings, Dan. vii. 8, 24. who receive power as kings one hour (or at one time) with the beast, Rev, xvii. 12. The imperial head of Rome was wounded to death when Augustulus was deposed, A. D. 476. after this the bishop of Rome gradually rose to the summit of power. The emperor Justinian declared him to be the judge of all, but himself to be judged by none, about A. D. 529. The tyrant Phocas engaged him in his party by giving him the title of universal bishop, A. D. 606. But he did not become a horn or secular prince till Pepin king of France vested him in a great part of Italy, A. D. 756; which was confirmed to him by Charles the Great, with additional donations and powers, A. D. 774.

* The woman's flight is mentioned twice in Rev. xii. first in ver. 6. where it is placed before the casting out of the great dragon, then in ver. 14. after the dragon is cast out, and a profession of Christianity is established in the empire. Some consider the first period to be the beginning, and the last the completion of her flight, and reckon the 1260 days of her wilderness state from both.

a Dan. viii. 11---15. b Rev. xii. 6, 14.

forty and two months.[c] It is the time when God's two witnesses * prophesy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth, who are at last overcome and killed by the beast, and whose dead bodies are exposed for a time in the street of the great city, or Antichristian church, which for filthiness is compared to Sodom, for tyranny and oppression to Egypt, and for persecution cruelty and bloodshed to Jerusalem, which killed the prophets, and crucified our Lord himself.[d]

This was a most trying period for those who kept the commandments of God, and the faith of

* Some by the two witnesses understand the Old Testament and the New. Christ appeals to the Old Testament scriptures as testifying of him. John v. 39---42. and Christians are directed to attend to the scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments as the great preservative against the corruptions of Christianity that were to take place, 2 Thess. ii. 15. 2 Tim. iii. 2 Pet. iii. 2. Still, however, it must be owned, that these two witnesses prophesied by means of a succession of men who were raised up from time to time to bring forth the doctrine of the scriptures in opposition to the corruptions of Antichrist. These witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, in a mourning dejected state; and in the account given of them there are allusions to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, to Elijah during the apostacy of the ten tribes, and to Zerubbabel and Joshua about the end of the captivity; and as they denounced divine judgments on the apostate church, they are said to smite the earth with all plagues, Rev. xi. 4---7. They were at last overcome and killed by the beast for a time, when the divine authority of scripture was entirely subjected to that of the false church, and when those who contended for that authority in opposition to the doctrines and commandments of men, were almost exterminated, or at least silenced; which seems to have been about the middle of the fifteenth century, when the Bohemians and Moravians agreed to re-unite with the church of Rome, and comply with her superstitions, and joined in exterminating the Tahorites or Vaudois, who stood firm for the authority of the scriptures in opposition to that of the Romish church.

c Rev. xi. 2. d Chap. xi. 3, 7, 8.

Jesus. But Christ, ever faithful to his promise, was with them always. He prepared a place of retreat for his true church in the wilderness, where, during the time of her obscurity and distress, she was fed and nourished like Elijah when he fled from the face of wicked Ahab and Jezebel, while idolatry and famine prevailed in Israel.[e] And though his followers did not in that desolate situation enjoy the public ordinances of the gospel according to their primitive institution, yet they worshipped in the inner temple in spirit and in truth, drawing near to God in the heavenly sanctuary, through the veil of Christ's flesh, and so were owned by him, and included in the measurement of his house, while the outer court and its worshippers were rejected.[f] He also from time to time raised up a succession of men, who brought forth the testimony of his two witnesses, the Old and New Testaments, for their edification and comfort, and to guard them against the reigning corruptions of the time.[g] So that notwithstanding all the delusions and cruel persecutions of the man of sin, they obtained the victory, through faith and patience, over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name.[h]

Nor was he less faithful and just in executing the judgments written in his word upon the corrupters of Christianity. We have already seen

e Rev. xii. 6, 14. 1 Kings xvii. 3---7. ver. 16. chap. xix. 6---9.
f Rev. xi. 1, 2. g Ver. 3---7. h Chap. xv. 2.

the downfal of the Roman empire in the West, and the rise of the man of sin upon its ruins, whose strong delusions were by divine permission sent as a judgment upon all who received not the love of the truth.[i] And now three woes are denounced upon the inhabiters of the earth, which were to take place under the three last trumpets.[k] The two first chiefly relate to the eastern empire, though they also greatly affected the western parts, and were sent as a punishment upon false and idolatrous professors, who had not the seal of God on their foreheads.[l] The first wo[m] appears to have been the impostor Mohammed, whose false religion is compared to thick smoke, bursting from the bottomless pit, and darkening the sun and air. The swarms of locusts issuing from that smoke, were his followers the Arabians or Saracens, for to them the whole description fitly applies. These had power to hurt men five prophetic months, or 150 years, during which time they extended their conquests, and propagated their religion over a great part of the world which had formerly professed Christianity.* The second wo[n] seems to

* Mohammed began his pretences to inspiration about A. D. 606, the year that Pope Boniface III. obtained the title of universal bishop. He began publicly to propagate his imposture A. D. 612, and so opened the bottomless pit. The Saracens made their greatest conquests from that time to A. D. 762. They subdued Palestine, Syria, both Armenia's, Asia Minor, Persia, India, Egypt, Numedia, Barbary, Portugal, Spain, a great part of Italy, Sicily, Candia, Cyprus, &c.

i 2 Thess. ii. 9---13. k Rev. viii. 13. l Chap. ix. 4, 20.
m Chap. ix. 1---12. n Chap. ix. 13---20.

have been the Turks and Othmans, whose four leaders had been restrained from extending their conquests farther than the territories adjoining the Euphrates by the Persians on one hand, and the croisades on the other; but uniting under Ortogrul and his successors, they begun their conquests about the year 1281, took Constantinople A. D. 1453, and conquered all the eastern branch of the Roman empire.* Towards the end of this wo there is an account of the death and resurrection of the two witnesses.[r] They had prophesied in sackcloth from the time of the woman's flight into the wilderness, and the beast had made war against them,† but could not overcome and kill

* The time allotted for their conquests was "an hour and a day, and a month, and a year," Rev. ix. 15. which by reckoning a year for a day, is 391 years 15 days. But it must be remembered that the prophetic year is 5 days 6 hours shorter than the Julian year. The instruments of this wo are described as horsemen; a fit representation of the Othman forces which were chiefly composed of cavalry.

† It is shocking to relate the cruelties exercised upon the Waldenses in the thirteenth century. In France alone about a million of them were slain; yet still their public testimony was not silenced. With regard to the origin and character of the Vaudois or Waldenses, we shall take the testimony of two of their enemies. Sesselius archbishop of Turin, in a book which he wrote against them, says, "The sect of the Waldenses took its rise from a most religious person, called Leo, who lived in the time of Constantine the Great, and who, detesting the covetousness of Pope Sylvester, and the immoderate bounty of Constantine, chose rather to embrace poverty with the simplicity of the Christian faith, than with Sylvester to be defiled with a fat and rich benefice; and all they that were seriously religious joined themselves to him." Reinerius the famous inquisitor general, who flourished about the year 1254, says, "Among all the sects which still are or have been,

r Rev. xi. 3---14.

them till their testimony in that mournful condition was about to be finished. The council of Constance condemned Wickliff's doctrine, and sentenced John Huss and Jerom of Prague to the flames, A. D. 1416: this with the severe decrees of that council against the Hussites and Vaudois, excited great ferments in Bohemia which broke out into a most bloody civil war. In 1434 matters were compromised with the greater part of the Hussites, who, upon being allowed the use of the cup in the sacrament, submitted in all other things to the papal hierarchy, and joined in exterminating the Taborites or Vaudois who stood firm to their principles, and contended for the authority of the word of God against the authority and errors of the church of Rome, so that their public testimony was silenced for a time, and their enemies every where triumphed over them. This looks very like the killing of the witnesses; for by the year 1467

there is none that hath been so pernicious to the church as that of the Leonists; and that for three reasons; 1. Because it is the most ancient; for some affirm that it began in the time of Pope Sylvester, and others in the time of the apostles. 2. Because it hath spread itself farthest; for there is scarce any country wherein this sect is not. 3. Because they who are of it have a great show of piety, live virtuously before men, believe rightly of the Deity, and all the articles which are contained in the creed; only they blaspheme the church of Rome and the clergy; whom the multitude of the laity is easy to believe." *Reiner. contra Hæret. cap.* 4. They were most numerous in the vallies of Piedmont, and hence are called *Valdenses* or *Vaudois*, and not from Peter Valdo, and also *Piedmontois*, likewise *Leonists* probably from Leo their ancient leader, and not from Lyons as some suppose. They were afterwards variously named. Their creeds, confessions and other writings which have been preserved are most agreeable to scripture.----The reader who desires further information respecting the Waldenses, and the persecutions they endured, may find it in *Mr. W. Jones's History of the Christian Church*, 2 vols. 8vo.

all their public teachers were cut off, and scarcely seventy of them could be collected together to chuse others. But in a short time the scattered remains of them formed themselves into a new sect which went by the name of *the Brethren of Bohemia*: and having with great prudence and impartiality reviewed and reformed their religious tenets and ecclesiastical discipline by the word of God, and excommunicated all those whose erroneous sentiments or licentious manners might expose them to reproach, they openly professed their principles, and held forth the testimony of the scriptures against all the corruptions and abominations of the church of Rome. This seems to have been the beginning of the resurrection of the witnesses, when "the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet."[s] For after this period the beast, with all his efforts, could not prevail against them so as to silence their testimony; on the contrary, various events in divine providence soon concurred to exalt them above his reach, to the terror and amazement of the whole antichristian community.[t] This completes the second wo.

The third wo cometh quickly after it, and begins with the sounding of the seventh trumpet.[u] It brings the ruin and downfal of the antichristian kingdom by successive steps, and so makes way for, and introduces the glorious period when, the kingdoms of this world shall become our Lord's

s Rev. xi. 11. t Ver. 12, 13. u Ver. 14, 15.

and his Christ's, and when he shall judge the dead, and give reward unto his servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear his name small and great, and shall destroy them that destroy (or corrupt) the earth.[x] This is a summary anticipation of all that shall take place under the seventh trumpet unto the end of time, the particulars of which are enlarged upon afterwards; but the wo part of it includes particularly the seven successive vials of divine wrath,[y] which gradually consume the man of sin, and shall at last totally destroy him and all other powers which shall be found opposing the kingdom of Christ;[z] for they are the seven last plagues, and in them is (ἐτελέσθη) completed the wrath of God.[a]

I will not presume to attempt an explanation of the particular judgments marked out by the seven vials, or to fix the dates at which each of them begins and ends, especially as some of them have not yet been poured out, and as it is most likely that the vials which are first in order are not always exhausted when the succeeding ones begin. But we may observe,

1. That the chief object of these plagues is the kingdom of antichrist and its supporters; for they affect them that have the mark of the beast and worship his image, who have shed the blood of the saints; and also the seat of the beast, the great city Babylon, with the cities of the nations.[b]

x Rev. xi. 15—19. y Chap. xvi. z Dan. vii. 26. 2 Thess. ii. 8. a Rev. xv. 1. b Chap. xvi. 2, 6, 10, 19.

2. The æra of the vials did not commence till the seventh trumpet was sounded. This is clear from the whole frame and admirable arrangement of the book of the Revelation; for as the seven trumpets are all included under the seventh seal, so are the seven vials under the seventh trumpet; but the seventh trumpet was not sounded till the second wo was past, after the death and resurrection of the witnesses, and the fall of the tenth part of the city:* and if these events took place between the middle of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, the æra of the vials, which constitute the third wo, must have commenced about the time of the Reformation, which began A. D. 1516. At this period we may date the pouring out of the first vial, which was a most grievous plague upon the kingdom of antichrist; for now the everlasting gospel began to be preached more openly and universally to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people:[c] the scriptures were translated into

* The kingdom of the Greeks seems to have been one of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided when the imperial head fell in the West. Its religion was antichristain as well as that of Rome; one of its emperors greatly advanced the power of the Pope, and another of them granted him the title of universal bishop, A. D. 606; and in the year 1439 a kind of union took place between the Latin and Greek churches. It is therefore probable that the fall of the tenth part of the city was the taking of Constantinople by the Turks. A. D. 1453, which put an end to the Greek empire. Those who fled from Constantinople into the West, brought with them the knowledge of the language wherein the New Testament was written, which contributed much to the Reformation.

c Rev. xiv. 6, 7.

the living languages, and by means of the art of printing, which had but lately been invented, were published and dispersed among the nations: the arrogance, avarice, deceit, idolatry and superstition of the papal hierarchy were now exposed in all their hatefulness, while some of the powers of the earth, minding their worldly interest, withdrew their allegiance from the Pope, and opposed the persecution which he raised against those who published the word of God. Thus the unity of the antichristian kingdom was broken so as never more to be healed; for we find the great city in a divided state at the pouring out of the last vial:[d] but this great division did not in general produce a separation of Christ's people from the world, nor such a restoration of the primitive order of his house as could be measured by the rule of God's word. The outer court still remained in possession of the profane Gentiles.

3. As the first four trumpets represent so many steps of the ruin of the Roman empire, and of its Cæsarean government, so the four first vials represent so many degrees of the ruin of the Roman hierarchy and papal government; and as the Roman empire is represented by the system of the world, having its earth, sea, rivers and sun, which were affected by the trumpets;[e] so the kingdom of antichrist is also represented as having its earth, sea, rivers and sun, which are affected in the same order by the vials:[f] further, as Rome papal is compared

d Rev. xvi. 19. e Chap. viii. 7---13. f Chap. xvi. 2---10.

to Egypt and Babylon;[g] so her plagues are represented as similar to theirs.[h]

4. It was the fourth trumpet that put an end to the imperial government of Rome,[i] and as it appears that the man of sin came to his throne about the beginning of the fifth trumpet and first wo: so it is likely that his reign shall end at the pouring out of the fifth vial upon his seat or throne, since it extinguishes his sun and fills his kingdom with darkness;[k] though he will not be finally destroyed till the seventh vial is poured out.

5. There are two remarkable periods of the ruin of antichrist represented by a harvest and vintage,[l] which are figures expressive of very dreadful judgments: but as the vials contain the seven last plagues in which the wrath of God is filled up, it is likely that the harvest answers to the fifth vial, and the vintage to the seventh.

6. The sixth vial is only a preparatory one to the seventh. The drying up of the waters of the great river Euphrates, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared,[m] alludes to the stratagem of Cyrus in draining the channel of the Euphrates to make way for his taking ancient Babylon, and so must import some notable step towards the ruin of its antitype. On the other hand, the dragon, i. e. the devil, and antichrist in his double capacity of a beast and false prophet, make preparations for the most vigorous attack upon the kingdom of

g Rev. xi. 8. h Chap. xvi. 2, 4, 10. chap. xviii. i Chap. viii. 12. k Chap. xvi. 10. l Chap. xiv. 15. ad ult. m Joel iii. 13. Jer. li. 33. n Rev. xvi. 12.

Christ, by collecting all their forces; and for this purpose send forth their wicked and deceitful emissaries, termed the spirits of devils, unto the kings of the earth, and of all the world, to stir them up to unite in the common cause of tyranny and false religion, and to oppose all reformation and the spread of the gospel: Accordingly these impure spirits, through the influence of delusion, gather them together into a place called Armageddon (i. e. the mountain of destruction,) alluding to Megiddo where Sisera and the host of Jabin were overthrown.[o] Thus all things are prepared for the battle of the great day of God Almighty.[p] As Christ will now come suddenly and unexpectedly to destroy his enemies, he gives his people warning, that they may watch and be prepared for his coming; "Behold I come * as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame."[q]

7. The seventh and last vial is poured out into the air, the seat of Satan's residence, who is termed "the prince of the power of the air,"[r] and there-

* There are but two *personal* comings of Christ; the first when he came in the flesh; the second when he comes in his glory to raise the dead and judge the world at the last day; yet he is also said to come when he interposes by any signal act of his administration. Thus he came when he shed forth the Spirit upon his disciples, John xiv. 18. and when he punished the Jewish nation for their infidelity. Mat. xxiv. 27, 39, 42. So the destruction of the man of sin is said to be by the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 8.

o Judg. v. 19. p Rev. xvi. 13--17. q Ver. 15.
r Eph. ii. 2.

fore will not only complete the destruction of antichrist, but shake the kingdom of Satan every where. Upon the pouring out of this vial, a voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, proclaims, "It is done;" according as it was before declared, that in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the mystery of God shall be finished.[s] It is accompanied with voices, and thunders, and lightnings, a terrible earthquake, and great hail, which import great revolutions and awful judgments. We are particularly informed that "the great city was divided into three parts,* and the cities of the nations fell; and great

* Some are of opinion that the division of the great city into three parts is not the effect of the seventh vial, but descriptive of the state wherein that vial finds the great city; and that this division took place at the time of the Reformation, when the kings or powers of the earth began to differ about the form of Christianity they were to establish, support and defend in their respective dominions. Be this as as it may, I think it must be admitted, that the divisions which then took place came at last to settle into *three* distinct stated communions, viz. the Popish, the Lutheran, and the Zuinglian or Calvanistic; and though there are other smaller divisions in the great city, yet these three are the only national forms of religious communion, which the kingdoms under antichrist have adopted, established and incorporated into their political constitutions: and as they are all worldly establishments comprehending the profane people of the nations, and in this respect opposed to the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and the purity of Christian communion, they may be considered as homegeneal parts of the great city, though divided. And as the unparalleled earthquake of the last vial affects all the divided parts of the great city, causing the cities of the nations to fall, the islands to flee away, and the mountains to disappear, it seems to point out the ruin of all national churches, as well as the

s Rev. x. 6, 7.

Babylon came in remembrance before God to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."[t] But the particulars of this vial are more largely set forth in the succeeding chapters. After an account of the great whore,[u] the fall of Babylon the great is proclaimed, the people of God are called to come out of her;[x] her adherents, whose worldly interests were promoted by her traffic, are represented as lamenting her fall,[y] whilst the whole church of the redeemed are set forth as rejoicing over her, and uniting in praises and thanksgivings to God for his truth and righteousness in judging her.[z] The battle of the great day of God Almighty, which had been before announced,[a] now takes place: Heaven is opened, and Christ, who is called The Word of God, and whose title is KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, comes forth seated upon a white horse, having many crowns upon his head, and arrayed in warlike apparel; the armies of heaven follow him riding also upon white horses, and clothed in fine linen, white and clean, as emblems of victory and sanctity. On the other side, the beast, with the kings of the earth and their armies, are represented as gathered together to

putting down of all that worldly rule, authority and power by which they are supported. Compare Rev. xvi. 19, 20. with Dan. ii. 34, 35. 1 Cor. xv. 24.

t Rev. xvi. 17. ad ult. u Chap. xvii. x Chap. xviii. 2---5. y Ver. 9---20. z Chap. xix. 1---8. a Chap. xvi. 14. chap. xvii. 14.

make war against him that sits on the horse, and against his army: but they meet with a total and final overthrow; for the beast is taken, and with him the false prophet, and both are cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone; and the remnant are slain with the sword of him that sits upon the horse, and all the fowls are filled with their flesh.[b] Then the dragon, i. e. Satan himself, is bound a thousand years, and shut up in the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years shall be fulfilled,[c] which must import an effectual restraint of his power and influence during that time.

The events of the two last vials have not yet taken place; but the greater part of the apocalyptic prophecies respecting the suffering and depressed state of the church has been already fulfilled; and Christ has been with his people always, supporting them under all their conflicts and trials, and making them overcome by faith and patience. He has also by his providence destroyed the successive powers which formerly opposed his kingdom, and now, towards the end of the eighteenth century, we see the man of sin, once so formidable, in a state of deep consumption by the spirit of the Lord's mouth, and the vials of his wrath. It seems that multiform monster will yet try to regain his tyrannical power, and make a desperate attempt against the kingdom of Christ; but this is represented as his last effort, his dying struggle; for then

b Rev. xix. 11. ad ult. c Chap. xx. 1---4.

he, and all the powers which compose the body of the beast, shall be totally destroyed and given to the burning flame,[d] and Satan the grand deceiver shall be shut up in the bottomless pit.[e] Here the depressed and afflicted state of the church ends, and the happy period begins when the kingdoms of this world become our Lord's and his Christ's, and when the saints of the Most Hig shall take the kingdom, and shall possess it for ever, even for ever and ever.

Let us now take a cursory view of the prosperous state of Christ's kingdom which is to succeed the final ruin of antichrist and of all opposing powers, and which is so much insisted upon in scripture prophecy.

1. This happy period commences with what is termed in prophetic style, the *first resurrection*. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:* and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. And the rest of the dead lived

* This imports that the saints shall obtain the dominion, and that the administration of justice and judgment shall be given them, 1 Cor. vi. 2. It is the same with what is mentioned in Dan. vii. 22. "I beheld--- until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High: and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom."

d Dan. vii. 11. e Rev. xx. 3. f Rev. xi. 15. Dan. vii. 18.

not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."[d] Many understand this first resurrection literally of a proper resurrection of the body from the grave, though they are not agreed as to whether it shall be a resurrection of all the saints, or only of the martyrs who suffered during the heathen and antichristian persecutions; but as there are many weighty objections to the literal view,† I am inclined to think that it should

† Take for a specimen----1. This passage does not mention the resurrection of the *bodies*, but only of the *souls* of the martyrs. The word rendered *souls* here occurs six times in this book, and signifies the *life* or living principle in the body, chap. viii. 9. chap. xii. 11. it is *distinguished* from the body, chap. xviii. 13. and represented as existing in a state of *separation* from it, chap. vi. 9. but is never put for the body itself, far less for the dead body, which alone is the subject of a proper resurrection, or of *living again*.----2. A literal resurrection of the righteous a thousand years before that of the wicked, seems to contradict the plain account given of that matter in the gospels and epistles: for instance, Christ says, "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation," John v. 28, 29. The *hour* here cannot signify two different periods at 1000 years distance from each other; yet in that hour all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth: not the righteous dead only, for these are not *all that are in the graves;* nor the wicked dead only, for these have not *done good;* but in that hour both they that have done good, and they that have done evil, even all that are in their graves shall come forth, the one unto the resurrection of life, the other unto the resurrection of damnation.----3. Our Lord repeatedly declares that he will raise up believers *at the last day*, John vi. 39, 40, 44, 45. and he makes this last day to be the day at which men shall be *judged*, chap. xii. 48. and describes the judgment both of the righteous and wicked as taking place at the same period, Mat. xxv. 31. ad ult. Now to

d Rev. xx. 4--6.

be taken in a metaphorical sense. A resurrection is a well-known prophetic figure for a restoration, revival or advancement of the cause or interest of a people who have been borne down, depressed, and as it were buried by opposition. The Lord, promising deliverance to the Jews, says, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."[e] Ephraim in distress is encouraged to repentance by this promise, "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."[f] The restoration of Israel from their captivity is described under the figure of a resurrection of dry bones: God promiseth to open their graves, and

affirm, that there will be a day 1000 years after the *last day* for the resurrection and judgment of the wicked, not only contradicts this, but is a manifest impropriety of speech.---4. The book of the Revelation itself places the proper and general resurrection and judgment, both of the righteous and wicked, after the thousand years reign of the saints, and the destruction of the armies of Gog and Magog, Rev. xx. 11. ad ult. But to suppose that the saints, after having reigned with Christ 1000 years in their spiritual, immortal and glorified bodies, shall be surrounded with enemies in gross earthly bodies, or even appear in judgment to receive their final sentence after they had been so long glorified, seems altogether unnatural as well as unscriptural.---5. We are expressly told, that "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death," 1 Cor. xv. 26. and the Revelation declares the same, chap. xx. 14. But if the first resurrection be the destruction of death to the saints, then death is not the *last enemy* that shall be destroyed; for Gog and Magog are enemies which will be destroyed 1000 years after the first resurrection. These considerations convince me that the first resurrection is to be taken in a metaphorical sense.

[e] Isa. xxvi. 19. [f] Hos. vi. 2.

cause them to come out of their graves, and they are represented as living and standing up upon their feet.[g] The same metaphor is used in the book of the Revelation: antichrist is said to have power to give life to the image of the beast, when he revived and united the idolatry and tyranny of the Roman empire in his own administration;[h] and of the two witnesses it is said, that "after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them; and they stood on their feet."[i] Agreeably to this prophetic use of the figure, the first resurrection imports, a revival of true and primitive Christianity in the world; a raising up of the church of Christ from its depressed, captive and afflicted state, and the advancement, extension, and prevalence of his spiritual kingdom among all nations. It is represented as a resurrection of the souls of martyrs, and of such as had kept themselves pure from the abominations of antichrist, and signifies a revival in their successors of that spirit of faith, zeal, fortitude and purity which possessed them; a resurrection of that cause for which the martyrs and true followers of the Lamb had contended and suffered in all the foregoing ages of the church. They are declared *blessed* and *holy* that have part in the first resurrection: they are *holy* as being sanctified by the Spirit, and consecrated as priests of God and of Christ; and they are *blessed* in the enjoyment of the spiritual privileges,

g Ezek. xxxvii. 1--15. h Rev. xiii. 15. i Chap. xi. 11.

honours and dignities of Christ's kingdom; for they shall reign with him, and on such the second death, or punishment of a future state, shall have no power.[k] From all which it is evident, that none but the saints can really have any part in this resurrection, though others may enjoy some of the outward and temporal blessings which shall attend it. The duration of this period is repeatedly said to be a thousand years, hence it is commonly called the *Millennium*. Some think that each day in this period should be taken for a year, which will amount to 360,000 years; but it seems most natural to understand it literally.

2. There is ground to expect a remarkable *down-pouring of the Spirit* about the commencement of this happy period, even as there was at the first setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world. Besides the promises of the Spirit which were accomplished in the apostolic age, there are others which from the connection appear to refer to the time we are now speaking of. Thus Isaiah, after having described Christ's kingdom which was set up at his first coming, and then the succeeding desolate state of the Jews, represents this as continuing, "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."[a] The apostle Paul, speaking of the conversion of the Jews at this period, refers to a passage in Isaiah where a promise of the Spirit is made to them, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, my Spirit which

k Rev. xx. 6. a Isa. xxxii. 15—19.

is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever."[b] The Lord, having mentioned the forlorn dispersed state of Israel throughout the nations, among whom they had profaned his name, promises to gather them, cleanse them, and give them a new heart and spirit, and adds, "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."[c] The promise of pouring upon them the spirit of grace and supplication has also a view to this period.[d] Though we are not to expect the miraculous gifts of the apostolic age, yet the work of the Spirit will abundantly appear in qualifying men for propagating the gospel throughout the world, filling them with light, zeal, courage and activity in that work—in giving success and effect to the gospel by converting multitudes to the faith, quickening the dead in trespasses and sins, and translating them into the kingdom of Christ; and in enlightening, quickening, purifying and comforting the children of God, stirring them up to greater liveliness, love, zeal, activity and fruitfulness in his service. This copious effusion of the Spirit, producing these effects by means of the word, will, I apprehend, be the great quickening principle in the first resurrection. The consequence of this will be

3. An universal spread of the gospel, diffusing the

b Compare Rom. xi. 26, 27. with Isa. lix. 20, 21. c Ezek. xxxvi. 27. see also chap. xxxix. 28, 29. d Zech. xii. 10.

knowledge of the Lord throughout the world in a more extensive and effectual manner than ever it was before. This is repeatedly promised, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea;" and this shall take place in that day when the Gentiles shall seek to the branch of the root of Jesse, whose rest shall be glorious, and when "the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people,"—and shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."[e] The same promise of the universal knowledge of the glory of the Lord is repeated in the prophecy of Habakkuk.[f] This will be attended with corresponding effects; "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him,"[g]---Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."[h] And though we are not to imagine, that all the inhabitants of the globe will have the true and saving knowledge of the Lord; yet we may expect such an universal spread of light and religious knowledge as shall root up pagan, mohammedan and antichristian delusions, and produce many good effects upon those who are not really regenerated, by awing their minds, taming their ferocity, improving their morals, and making them peaceable and humane.

4. The Jews will then be converted to the faith of

e Isa. xi. 9, 10, 11, 12. f Hab. ii. 14. g Psal. xxii. 27. h Psal. lxxii. 11.

the Messiah, and partake with the Gentiles of the blessings of his kingdom. The apostle Paul in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans treats of this at large, and confirms it from the prophecies of the Old Testament. He is speaking of Israel in a literal sense, the natural posterity of Abraham; for he distinguishes them both from the believing Gentiles and the Jewish converts of his time, and describes them as the rest who were blinded, had stumbled and fallen, and so had not obtained, but were broken off and cast away.[j] Yet he denies that they have stumbled that they should fall, i. e. irrecoverably, so as in no future period to be restored, but shows that God's design in permitting this was, that through their fall salvation might come unto the Gentiles, and that this again might provoke them to jealousy or emulation.[k] He argues, that if their fall and diminishing was the riches of the Gentiles, and the casting away of them was the reconciling of the world, their fulness will be much more so, and the receiving of them be life from the dead.[l] He further argues, that if the Gentiles "were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree, how much more shall these which be the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree."[m] Nor did he consider this event as merely probable, but as absolutely certain; for he shows that the present blindness and future conversion of that people is the *mystery* or hidden sense of prophecies concerning them; and he cites two of these prophecies where

j Rom. xi. 7, 11, 12, 15, 17. k Ver. 11. l Ver. 12, 15. m Ver. 24.

the context foretels both their rejection and recovery:[n] "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away their sins."[o] He affirms positively, that Israel who have not now believed, shall as certainly obtain mercy, as the Gentiles have obtained mercy through the occasion of their unbelief: "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all."[p] Then he concludes with expressing his admiration of the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and of his unsearchable judgments and ways in this whole matter.[q]

As to the time when this shall take place, the same Apostle says, "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved."[r] The *fulness* of the Gentiles must be understood in the same sense with the *fulness* of the Jews,[s] and as the fulness of the Jews signifies the great body of that people as distinguished from the small remnant of them who

n Isa. lix. 20, 21. chap. xxvii. 9. o Rom. xi. 25, 26, 27.
p Ver. 30, 31, 32. q Ver. 33—36. r Ver. 25, 26. s Ver. 12,

were converted in the apostles' time ;[t] so the *fulness of the Gentiles* must import a more full and universal conversion of the Gentiles throughout all nations of the world than has ever yet taken place ; for at present not above a sixth part of the habitable world so much as profess Christianity. But when antichrist, that great stumbling-block shall be removed out of the way, when the gospel shall be preached among all nations in its primitive purity, and the fulness of the Gentiles be come in ; then shall the vail be taken off from the heart of the Jews, and it shall turn to the Lord.[u] They shall then acknowledge their own Messiah whom their forefathers rejected and crucified, and shall say, " Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."[x] " They shall look upon him whom they have pierced," not with contempt and derision as their progenitors did when he hung on the cross, but under the influence of the spirit of grace and supplication, " they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born."[y] Then " the children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king ; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." The Lord shall then set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people from their long captivity and outcast state ;[a] and when they shall be received again, and obtain mercy upon the same footing with the

t Rom. xi. 5. u 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16. x Mat. xxiii. 39. y Zech. xii. 10. z Hos. iii. 5. a Isa. xi. 11, 12. Ezek. xxxix. 25, 28, 29. Amos ix. 14, 15.

Gentiles, it will be "life from the dead," not only to them but to the world, as it will be a notable means in the hand of God of awakening men's attention to the gospel and convincing them of its truth, as well as of confirming, quickening and gladdening the children of God, who have been long waiting and praying for that happy event. Nay, there is ground to believe that the Jews will be distinguished for their zeal, activity and success in spreading the knowledge of the Lord among the nations; for the Gentiles are represented as instructed by them, honouring them, and flowing in unto them.[b]

5. The purity of visible church communion, worship and discipline will then be restored according to the primitive apostolic pattern. During the reign of antichrist a corrupted form of Christianity was drawn over the nations, and established in the political constitutions of the kingdoms which were subject to that monstrous power. By this means the children of God were either mixed in visible religious communion with the profane world, in direct opposition to the word of God, or persecuted for their nonconformity. In reference to this state of things, the angel commands John to leave out the court which is without the temple, and not to measure it, for this reason, because "it is given to the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months:"[c] i. e. they shall pollute and profane the worship and communion of the

b Isa. lvi. 8. chap. lx. 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12. chap. lxi. 6--10. chap. lxii. 2, 3, 4. chap. lxvi. 10---15. c Rev. xi. 2.

church during the 1260 years of antichrist's reign, so that it cannot be measured by the rule of God's word. But when the period we are speaking of shall arrive, the sanctuary shall be cleansed ;[d] the visible communion, worship, order and discipline of the house of God will then be restored to their primitive purity, and accord with the rule of the New Testament So it is promised to Zion, "henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."[e]—"Thy people shall be all righteous; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified,"[f]—"and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."[g] And though disguised hypocrites may still find access into the churches of the saints, as it does not appear that there will be a complete and final separation until the day of judgment, when Christ the omniscient judge shall separate the sheep from the goats ;[h] yet we may venture to affirm, that such will be the strictness of discipline and purity of communion, that no *visible* hypocrite or false professor will be permitted to have fellowship with the saints. For when the holy city, new Jerusalem comes down from God out of heaven, then, in this qualified sense, "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they who are written in the Lamb's book of life."[i]

6. The Lord's *special presence* and *residence* will

d Dan. viii. 14. e Isa. lii. 1. f Isa. lx. 21.
g Zech. xiv. 21. h Mat. xxv. 32. i Rev. xxi. 2, 27.

then be in the midst of his people. Christ hath promised to be with his people in every period of the church, even unto the end of the world,[k] and that he will be in the midst even of two or three of them when gathered together in his name:[l] he also calls them to purity of communion and personal holiness, and promiseth to dwell in them and walk in them:[m] but this will be fulfilled in an eminent and remarkable manner during the millennial period. The Lord, having promised to raise Israel out of their graves, to gather them from among the heathen, and bring them into the church and kingdom of Christ, as one fold having one Shepherd,[n] adds, "and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore: my tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people."[o] This alludes to his dwelling among Israel in the tabernacle and sanctuary of old,[p] and imports his manifesting himself unto them, admitting them into the most intimate correspondence and communion with himself in his ordinances, communicating light, life and consolation to them by his Spirit; and also his protection and care of them as his peculiar people. It is intimated that there will be such visible tokens of the divine presence and residence among them as will fall under the notice of the world and produce conviction and awe (as was in some measure the case in the first churches,[q]) for it is added, "And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify

k Mat. xxviii. 20 l Chap. xviii. 20. m 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17.
n Ezek. xxxvii. 11---26. o Ver. 26, 27. p Lev. xxvi. 11, 12.
q Acts ii. 47. chap. v. 11, 15. 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore."[r] Indeed this is that very promise which is represented to John as accomplished: "And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."[s]

7. This will be a time of universal peace, tranquillity and safety. Persons naturally of the most savage, ferocious and cruel dispositions will then be tame and harmless; so it is promised, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." And the reason given is, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[t] The same promise is afterwards repeated, and connected with the promise of new heavens and a new earth.[u] Whether we consider the persons represented by these hurtful animals to be converted or not, it is certain they will then be effectually restrained from doing harm, or persecuting the saints. There shall be no

r Ezek. xxxvii. 28. s Rev. xxi. 3. t Isa. xi. 6--10. u Chap. lxv. 17, 25.

war nor bloodshed among the nations during this happy period; for we are told, that, in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it—the Lord "shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."[x] The same promise is repeated word for word in the prophecies of Micah.[y] Much to the same purpose is that promise in Hosea,[z] "In that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword, and the battle, out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely." Though war has hitherto deluged the world with human blood, and been a source of complicated calamities to mankind; yet when Satan is bound, his influence upon wicked men restrained, and the saints bear rule, it must necessarily cease.

8. The civil rulers and judges shall then be all maintainers of peace and righteousness. Though Christ will put down all that rule, power and authority which opposeth the peace and prosperity of his kingdom; yet as rulers are the ordinance of God, and his ministers for good, as some form of government seems absolutely necessary to the or

x Isa. ii. 4. y Micah iv. 3. z Hos. ii. 18.

der and happiness of society in this world, I apprehend that, when the kingdoms of this world are become our Lord's and his Christ's, the promise will be accomplished, "I will also make thy officers peace, and thy exactors righteousness:" and in consequence of this, "violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise."[a] Peace and righteousness are the two great ends of government: Christ himself is King of righteousness and King of peace, and the civil rulers during that happy period will resemble him in their character and administration; for then shall that promise be fulfilled, "In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee."[b]

9. The saints shall then have the dominion, and the wicked shall be in subjection. This is clear from the united voice of prophecy. "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."[c]—"The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever."[d]—"The meek shall inherit the earth;"[e]—"shall reign on the earth;"[f]—"shall reign with Christ a thousand years;"[g]—"they shall be priests of God, and of

a Isa. lx. 17, 18. b Chap. liv. 14. c Dan. vii. 27.
d Chap. vii. 18. e Mat. v. 5. f Rev. v. 10. g Chap. xx. 4.

Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."[h] The saints are at present made kings and priests unto God—a kingly priesthood;[i] but then they shall be more eminently so, when by the holiness of their lives, the purity of their faith and worship, and their diligence in promoting pure and undefiled religion, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Then shall that promise be fully accomplished, "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God."[k] With regard to the nature of their reign, it will undoubtedly correspond in all respects with the spiritual and heavenly nature of Christ's kingdom, to the promotion of which all their power will be subservient. Those who cannot conceive of any reign on earth, but such as consists in lordly and oppressive dominion, maintained by policy and force, and made subservient to the purposes of pride, ambition, avarice and other worldly lusts, can have no idea at all of this reign of the saints with Christ, which is a reign of peace on earth and good will to men; a reign of truth and righteousness, of true godliness and universal humanity. In short, it is the prevalence and triumph of the cause of Christ in this world over that of Satan and all his instruments.

But "when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison a little season."[l] The restraint which was laid upon that restless and malignant spirit will be taken off for a short time.

h Rev. xx. 6. i 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6. k Isa. lxi 6. l Rev. xx. 3, 7.

He shall immediately avail himself of that liberty, and "shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." This vast multitude seem to be the *rest* or *remnant* of those who were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse,[n] and who live not again until the thousand years are finished,[o] but continue during the time of Satan's imprisonment in a state of political death: but when Satan is loosed he raiseth them up from that death, by exciting in them a spirit of pride, envy and enmity against Christ and his saints; and this he does by deceiving them, or representing things to them in a false light. They are termed Gog and Magog in allusion to what is said of these powerful enemies of God's people in the prophecy of Ezekiel,[p] there being a similarity between them in several particulars. "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city." The saints are represented as encamped, but not in an hostile manner. The allusion is to the encampment of Israel round the tabernacle in the wilderness.[q] The beloved city alludes to Jesusalem where God had placed his name, and where the whole church of Israel assembled to worship, and which is also figuratively put for the true church in its full order and beauty. When this vast army, led on by Sa-

m Rev. xx. 8. n Chap. xix. 21. o Chap. xx. 5.
p Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix. q Num. ii. 2.

tan, has compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city new Jerusalem, they are not able to hurt the church of God; but are only permitted to proceed thus far, that the church's deliverance and their own destruction might be the more conspicuous; for "fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."[r]

After this we have an account of Christ's glorious appearing: the literal resurrection of all the dead both righteous and wicked, and the judgment of the world, when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, being cast into the lake of fire which is the second death; but the righteous into life eternal.[s] Then "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up;"[t] for the apostle Peter connects this awful event with the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

In the two last chapters of the Revelation there is a vision of a new heaven and a new earth, and a description of the holy city new Jerusalem, with the river of the water of life, and the tree of life: and though there is no doubt a great deal of figure in these descriptions, yet they set forth such a happy

r Rev. xx. 7---11. s Ver. 11. ad ult. compared with Mat. xxv. 31. ad ult. t 2 Pet. iii. 10. u Ver. 7. 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16, 17.

and glorious state of things as far exceeds all our present conceptions. But men are divided in their opinions as to whether these two chapters are an enlargement upon the Millennium, which had only been briefly mentioned before, or relate to the ultimate glory and happiness of the church in the heavenly state. As these visions are placed after an account of the destruction of Gog and Magog, the resurrection of the dead and judgment of the world, it is natural to think that they succeed these events, and are descriptive of the final happiness of the saints in heaven. But the order in which the visions are placed does not always mark the order of time; for the same things are represented under different forms in successive visions, and the history sometimes goes back and comes over the same ground again with additional circumstances.*

The *heavens* and the *earth* are often used in a *figurative sense* in prophecy, and particularly in this book, and, in this sense John's vision of the new heavens and new earth[x] may apply to the Millennium. It appears to be the same with what is promised in Isa. lxv. 17. "Behold I create new hea-

* The Apocalypse is divided into two parts. The first contains a regular succession of events from the apostolic age down to the consummation of all things, the prophecy beginning with the opening of the first seal, chap. vi. 1. and ending with a summary of the events of the seventh trumpet, chap. xi. 15---19. The second part, which fills up the remainder of the book, falls within the same period, and is only an enlargement and illustration of the things contained in the former part, particularly such as relate to the church and its enemies. It is to this part of the book that the above observation refers.

x Rev. xxi. 1.

vens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind." And the happiness that shall be enjoyed in this new state of things is described to the end of that chapter in terms suited to the Millennium, but not to the ultimate blessedness of the saints in heaven. Yet the apostle Peter, referring to the same promise, applies it to that state of things which shall succeed the *literal* dissolution of the present heavens and earth by fire,[y] which must be the state of heavenly happiness. It is plain therefore that this promise has a twofold application; and as there are several prophecies of the Old Testament which have a first and secondary sense, involving in the same prediction the affairs both of the Jewish theocracy and of the kingdom of Christ, two connected though successive dispensations; so, in the present case, the prophetic spirit in dilating on the happiness of the Millennium, runs beyond it, and anticipates the succeeding glories of the heavenly state, to which it is so nearly allied.

Indeed, upon any other hypothesis, it is not easy to explain and reconcile the different things contained in the two last chapters of the Apocalypse. Some of them do not come up to the account which the scripture gives of the complete glory and happiness of the heavenly state. The new Jerusalem is repeatedly represented as "coming down from God out of heaven:"[z] not that John might get a view of it, as some conceive; for he

y 2 Pet. iii. 13. z Rev. xxi. 2, 10

had visions of things in heaven, and our Lord, in his promise to the church of Philadelphia, describes new Jerusalem as that "which cometh down out of heaven from God."[a] It must therefore be a happy state of the church on earth, when the tabernacle of God is with men, though of heavenly origin. But the scripture always represents the place of the saints' final happiness to be heaven itself where Christ now is: their great reward is in heaven, and the inheritance is reserved for them there.[b]—It is said, "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it—And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it."[c] It requires some explanation to show how this applies even to the church on earth, but seems altogether inapplicable to the heavenly glorified state.—Again, it is said, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there."[d] i. e. "its gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night,"[e] which imports the free and ready access which converts from all nations shall have into it, and who are called "the glory and honour of the nations" in the next verse, and in Isaiah "the forces of the Gentiles."[f] But there is no continued admission of converts into heaven after the accepted time and day of salvation is past.—Further, it is said of the tree of life "which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month,"

a Rev. iii. 12. b John xiv. 3. chap. xvii. 24. Mat. v. 12. 1 Pet. i. 4. c Rev. xxi. 24, 26. d Ver. 25. e Isa. lx. 11. f Rev. xxi. 26. Isa. lx. 11.

that " the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."[g] We cannot apply this to the heavenly state, unless we suppose that the nations of them that are saved will need this healing after they are raised from the dead and glorified. These particulars seem to be applicable only to the state of the church during the Millennium.

But there are some parts of the description, which, if taken in their strict and full sense, seem too high for the Millennium, or any state of the church short of heaven.—It is promised that " God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."[h] There are indeed expressions similar to these in Old Testament prophecies which seem to relate to a prosperous state of the church in this world,[i] and in this view must not be taken in an absolute but comparative sense, i. e. considered with relation to the foregoing afflicted and persecuted state of the church. But these expressions have also a higher sense, and are undoubtedly descriptive of the heavenly state; for this promise is the very same with that in the prophecies of Isaiah, " He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces;"[k] which the Apostle explains of the resurrection of the dead, when mortality shall be swallowed up

g Rev. xxii. 2. with Ezek. xlvii. 12. h Rev. xxi. 4. i Isa. xxxv. 10. Hos. xiii. 14. Zech xiv. 11. k Isa. xxv. 8.

of life.[l]—It is also said "that the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."[m] This certainly must ultimately intend heaven itself, where the Divine Majesty peculiarly resides and has placed his throne, where his glorious presence is most immediately and eminently manifested, and where the redeemed shall for ever enjoy the beatific vision of his blissful countenance.

"He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

l 1 Cor. xv. 54. m Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

# ESSAY

ON THE

# CALLS AND INVITATIONS

OF

# THE GOSPEL.

WITH

ANSWERS TO A VARIETY OF OBJECTIONS.

ON THE

# CALLS AND INVITATIONS

OF

# THE GOSPEL.

THE Gospel is the testimony of God concerning the person, mission, and work of Jesus Christ, including a promise of salvation to all who shall credit that testimony. God hath commanded that this gospel be proclaimed universally to all mankind, without exception of nation, sex, age, condition, or character, and freely, without any condition of works or merit, whereby one man can be supposed to be better qualified for, or entitled to salvation than another.

Considerable differences of sentiment have prevailed with respect to the invitations, calls, and exhortations which immediately accompany the declaration of the gospel, and are founded upon it. Many have greatly darkened and perverted the true grace of God by what have been termed ministerial calls, and exhortations, and gospel-offers. Directions have been given to men in a state of unbelief in what manner they should work themselves into a converted state and become qualified for trusting in Christ. Faith, by which alone men are justified, has been represented as a mysterious and laborious exercise of the mind, including every good disposition and affection of the heart, and men have been exhorted to strive hard to attain and perform this great work of believing, that they may be justified; and the peculiar

duties of the Christian life have been urged upon persons while they were yet supposed to be unbelievers, void of every principle of obedience, and that in order to their making their peace with God, and obtaining an interest in Christ. These things are not only improper but pernicious; for instead of presenting Christ as the immediate, free, and complete relief of the guilty, they convert the gospel into a law of works, and give the sinner as much to do in order to obtain an interest in Christ and his salvation, as if he were to obey the whole law. The natural effect of this is that men either dispair and give up after repeated attempts, or foster a kind of presumptuous hope founded upon their sincere endeavours.

But however the calls of the gospel may have been misrepresented and turned into a scheme of self-righteousness, this can never warrant us to deny that there are calls and exhortations to unbelievers in the gospel.

When we speak of gospel calls to *unbelievers* it may be proper to explain who are intended by this designation. By unbelievers I do not mean merely heathens who worship idols; or desists who deny divine revelation; or Jews, who, though they admit the Old Testament revelation, deny its true meaning as unfolded in the New Testament; but also all those called Christians who are in an unconverted state, and even all such as make use of the gospel to establish their own righteousness, and have not found rest to their souls from the divine testimony concerning the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is evident that among these different classes of unbelievers, there are very different degrees of knowledge, and that each of them is addressed in the scriptures in a way suited to their peculiar circumstances.

When the apostle addresses mere heathens, he declares unto them first of all the true God, and exposes the absurdity of idolatry, Acts xiv. 11—19. xvii. 22—32. But in addressing the Jews he proceeds upon their acknowledgment of the one true God and of the Old Testament as a revelation from him, from which he evinces that Jesus was the promised and expected Messiah, Acts xvii. 2, 3. xxviii. 23. I shall now proceed to shew,

I. That the gospel not only contains a declaration of facts concerning the person and work of Christ, with their import, but also invitations, calls, and exhortations founded upon that declaration.

II. I shall take notice of some of the chief objections made to these calls.

When attempting to shew that the gospel contains calls and invitations to unbelievers, I would not be mistaken. I do not mean that any will comply with the calls of the gospel while they continue in unbelief, but only that these calls are addressed to them while in that state. This our lord clearly shews, when he says, "Many are called but few are chosen." Matth. xxi. 14. Let us consider a few of these calls and invitations.

In Isaiah lv. 1—4, the Lord gives the following most free and gracious call; "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an ever-

lasting covenant with you, *even* the sure mercies of David." That this is a gospel-call is evident, from the mention of the everlasting covenant and sure mercies of David, which is explained as regarding Christ, Acts xiii. 34. That it is a call to unbelievers appears from the persons to whom it is addressed being termed the *wicked* and *unrighteous*, ver. 7.

Jesus himself in the days of his flesh thus invited sinners, Matth. xi. 28, "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, &c." That this call was addressed to unbelievers appears from their being described as weary and heavy laden; as not having yet taken Christ's yoke upon them, nor found rest to their souls.

Answerable to the call in Isaiah is that in John vii. 37. "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters." This is addressed to Jews, who were evidently then in a state of unbelief, and is a call to believe in him.

In Rev. xxii. 16, 17. he says, "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning Star: and the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Though the former part of this citation is expressive of the earnest desire of the redeemed for Christ's second coming, yet the latter part of it contains an invitation to him that is athirst, and whosoever will, to take of the water of life freely, as in Isaiah lv. 1. Christ represents

the preaching of the Gospel under the notion of inviting to a marriage-supper, where all things were prepared, and ready for their use. All sorts of guests are invited; the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind; and that from every place that could be supposed the haunts of the destitute and the miserable—such as the streets and the lanes of the city, the highways, and hedges of the fields: and his servants are enjoined to bid them come unto the marriage; nay, to *compel* them to come in, that his house may be filled with guests. See Matth. xxii. 2—15. Luke xiv. 16—24. This surely must mean not merely a declaration, that all things are ready, but also the most earnest and pressing invitation to come and partake. Nor can any one reasonably doubt that the subjects of these invitations were unbelievers, for those to whom they were at first addressed *refused*; and the last invitation was addressed to idolatrous Gentiles who were without God, and without hope in the world. Lest it should be thought that this strains the parable beyond its intention, we may refer to Paul's account of the manner in which the apostles executed their commission in compelling men to come in: "All things," says he, "are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, *viz.* That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech *(men)* by us; we pray *(them)* in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be a sin-offering for us," &c. 2 Cor. v. 18—21. From these words it is plain that the apostolic

commission contained not only a testimony, but intreaty or earnest calls and invitations founded upon that testimony. 1st, They were commissioned to testify and declare that God had by Christ reconciled the world to himself by making him a sin-offering, and did not impute their trespasses, but granted remission of them to those who believed this testimony, declaring, when they said so, what is intended by these words of the parable, "All things are ready." But this was not all: for they, 2dly, had it in commission to urge and beseech sinners to be reconciled to God; so he adds, "God doth beseech *men* by us, we pray *them* in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God," &c. They were to press home the doctrine of reconciliation upon guilty rebels, as the grand motive and argument for their being reconciled to God; to impress them upon the consciences of men, and to excite their affections, their hopes, and fears, by every motive contained in their commission. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, they were to persuade men, by awakening in careless and insensible sinners, a conviction of their state and of their danger in rejecting the great salvation. On the other hand they were to set before them the evidence, fulness, suitableness, and freedom of that salvation, and the happiness of enjoying it, in order to allure them by the mercies of God; in the whole of this addressing themselves not merely to men's speculative faculty, but to every man's conscience in the sight of God. This earnest intreaty, beseeching and praying men to be reconciled to God, answers to these words of the parable, "Compel them to come in." We all know what influence the pressing invitations and important intreaties even of our fellow creatures have upon the

most obdurate and inflexible minds. These often prevail when all other methods have proved ineffectual to move them. God hath condescended to use this way to work upon men.

But the Lord not only calls and invites men who are in a natural state to believe in Christ, and to partake of the blessings of the gospel, but in connexion with this he commands them to repent of their sins, be converted, turn unto the Lord, and call upon him. I shall mention a few texts, among a great number that might be quoted to the same purpose. Is. lv. 6—12. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him, while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Here is a call to the wicked and unrighteous man; a gospel-call, as appears from the context, and so not peculiar to the Jews. It is a call to the wicked to seek the Lord; to forsake his wicked way and thoughts, and return unto the Lord. The time prescribed is, "while he may be found; while he is near." The encouragement given is, "The Lord will have mercy on him and will abundantly pardon.' All this is founded on the "everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David," ver. 3.

In the New Testament unconverted persons are exhorted in the same manner. John the Baptist exhorted all who heard him, without distinction, to repent and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; using this argument, "The kingdom of God is at hand," Matth. iii. 2, 7, 8.

Peter exhorted the convicted Jews thus—"Repent,

and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins;—and with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation," Acts ii. 38, 40. And lest it should be thought that this exhortation belongs to those only who are under conviction, we find him addressing impenitent Jews in the same style. After having shewn them that God had raised and glorified his Son Jesus, whom they had denied and crucified, he says to them, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," chap. iii. 19.; and although he perceived Simon Magus to be still in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, yet he did not scruple to exhort him thus: "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee," chap. viii. 22.

But why need I produce any more instances of such exhortations? Does not our Lord declare that the great end of his coming into the world was "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance?" Mark ii. 17. Will any one maintain that by sinners he means only believers? Paul tells the elders at Ephesus that the great subject of his ministry was "testifying to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xx. 21. He gives the same account of it before Agrippa, saying "That he shewed the Gospel first to them at Damascus and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance," chap. xxvi. 20. Can we suppose that they were believers he was thus calling every where to faith and repentance?

Speaking of the insensible and benighted Gentiles, and their unfruitful works of darkness, he thus sums up the call of God to them in his word, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. v. 14. He tells the idolatrous Athenians who scoffed at him and his doctrine, that the Creator of all gave men a being in this world, and discovered himself to them in creation and providence for this very end, "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us;" so that they were inexcusable in their idolatry. He adds, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," Acts xvii. 27, 30, 31. Surely no man will affirm, that *all men every where* are believers; yet we are told that by the gospel God commands all men every where to repent. It appears then from the whole, undeniable, that the Gospel contains calls, invitations, and exhortations to men while in a state of unbelief. I shall now,

II. Take notice of some of the chief objections made to such calls and invitations. If the scriptures are admitted to be the word of God, every objection against the plain passages which have been cited, may well receive the answer, "*Nay, but who art thou who repliest against God?*" However, as the children of God themselves are but partially enlightened, and may have difficulties in reconciling one part of Scripture with another, I shall endeavour to solve some of their difficulties respecting what has been advanced.

OBJECTION 1st. It is objected "That the scripture clearly declares no man can believe, repent, or be converted by his own natural power. Faith is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. Eph. ii. 8. No man, says Christ, cometh unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him, John vi. 44. It is God that grants to sinners repentance unto life. Acts xi. 18. Conversion and regeneration are ascribed only to God. It is he who gives the new heart and spirit. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, who of his own will begets his people with the word of truth, James i. 18. and they are born again of the Spirit, John iii. 5. Men are declared to be naturally enemies to God, without strength, nay, actually dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. And all their salvation is ascribed solely to the sovereign free grace of God; for it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, Rom. ix. 16. Now if this is the case, with what propriety can men be commanded and exhorted to do that which the Scripture declares they cannot do, and which divine power alone can effect? Can we suppose that God would ever require impossibilities of his creatures?"

*Ans.* This objection is frequently started for very different purposes. The Arminians make it in order to establish free-will or man's moral ability to obey the gospel-calls; for, say they, if man had not that power he would never be exhorted to do it. Others, who admit man's inability, make the same objection with a view to repel all exhortations to unbelievers; for, say they, since man in his natural state is as unable to do any thing spiritually good as the dead in the grave, he can with no propriety be exhorted to any thing while in that that state.

But both these conclusions are false, for it has been already clearly proved that the gospel calls and exhorts unbelievers: whilst at the same time it also declares that none will comply with these calls and come unto Christ but such as are drawn of the Father. The above conclusions are founded upon the following erroneous principle, viz. "That God never commands or exhorts men to do any thing beyond the compass of their natural power." Now that this is a false principle will appear from this, that it amounts to a denial, either of the corruption of human nature, or of the obligation, perfection, and justice of the divine law.

1. It implies a denial of the corruption of human nature; for if man's natural ability be equal to the rule of his duty there can be no corruption in his nature. To say he is able to do all that is commanded *if he pleases*, is only to say that he is able if he were able; for man's inability chiefly consists in the want of will or inclination. God indeed made man originally upright, and so capable to do all that he required. His *duty* and *ability* then perfectly corresponded; but man having voluntarily apostatised from God lost his moral image, and so became unable to do any thing spiritually good in consequence of the darkness of his mind and the aversion of his will to the things of God. In this state every thing he does is wrong because his leading principles and predominant motives are so. Hence "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. viii. 8. Now if man's inability be admitted, then it must also be granted that God commands what men are not now able to do.

2. This principle goes to deny, that God now insists upon his holy law as the rule of obedience to all mankind, or that they are sinners in breaking that law. But if man by his rebellion has lost all spiritual ability to obey God's law, can this ever alter the rule of his duty, or dissolve his original obligation to love God supremely and to obey him? Is the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness set aside, because the carnal mind is not subject to it, neither indeed can be? Is it improper in the Divine Sovereign to insist upon what is holy, just, and good, because men are carnal, sold under sin? Has he brought down and accommodated his law to the corruption of human nature? And what kind of law would it be in that case but a law allowing of sin, equally contrary to the divine perfections and government as to the true happiness of man? God's commands must ever correspond with man's duty and obligations, and not with his sinful inability and corruptions. These considerations should lead a man to a humble sense of his own inability and guilt, and so to justify God and condemn himself; but instead of this the principle under consideration strikes against the justice and perfection of God's law, man's obligation to obey it, and consequently against all conviction of guilt, in disobeying it, and all this because he is not able, i. e. *does not like it.* Can any thing more clearly discover the pride and enmity of the human heart both against God and his law than this very principle?

3. This principle repels the evidence, calls, and invitations of the gospel. The gospel declares, *that God was by Christ reconciling the world to himself, not*

*imputing their trespasses unto them:* that this was accomplished by his sending his Son into the world, substituting him in the room of the guilty; delivering him up to the death as an atoning sacrifice for their offences: and raising him again from the dead to an immortal life of glory in the heavens for their justification: that hereby the law is perfectly fulfilled and magnified, divine justice fully satisfied, and God glorified and well pleased in the obedience to the death of his beloved Son. It also declares that whosoever credits this testimony upon the authority of God shall be justified without any works of theirs, but purely by the free grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Upon this ground it addresses *all mankind,* every one who hath ears to hear; *calling* upon them to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation; it *beseeches* them to come and partake *freely* of the blessings of a complete salvation, *without money and without price;* which it represents as a royal marriage-supper, wherein all things are ready prepared to their hand without their own labour and industry, and free for their immediate use.

One would think that this should entirely remove every objection. But instead of crediting God, receiving his word with thankfulness and joy, and giving him the glory of his faithfulness and grace, the objection of inability to believe and repent, &c. is set up, which repels the gracious call in this manner: "There is indeed salvation in Christ, but it is only for those who believe. Men are called to believe and partake of the blessings of the gospel freely, but they might as well be exhorted to obey the law perfectly, for they are as incapable to do the former as the latter, being utterly dead in trespasses

and sins. Notwithstanding all that Christ hath done, notwithstanding the completeness of his salvation, the nearness of the word of faith, and the evidence by which it is confirmed, yet sinners can no more believe than they can ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above; or descend into the deep to bring up Christ again from the dead. To what purpose then exhort dead men to believe, repent, "&c. Now, whatever show this objection makes of abasing the creature and exalting the sovereignty of divine grace, it evidently darkens and clouds that grace in the very point of view wherein it gives relief to the guilty conscience, by setting salvation at as great a distance as if Christ had neither died nor risen again. It makes light of all that Christ has done for the salvation of the guilty, and of the strength to believe arising from the gospel-evidence of this. It converts the gospel calls and free invitations into a law of works, and considers them as tantalizing dead sinners and requiring impossibilities of them. In short, it is plainly the language of unbelief cloaking itself under the plea of man's inability. It is the sullen murmur of a heart repining and replying against God, as reaping where he hath not sown, and gathering where he hath not strawed.

It is freely granted that man cannot believe of himself without divine illumination: Faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God; but this can never make the gospel calls and invitations improper. God may well command what men cannot perform of themselves, because he can bestow what he requires. When Moses objected to the Lord's command in sending him to Pharaoh on account of his want of eloquence, the Lord replies, "Who made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the

seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Exod. iv. 11. It is surely competent for him who at first commanded light to shine out of darkness, to call men out of spiritual darkness into his marvellous light. He who spoke the world into existence out of nothing, and quickens the dead, may with the greatest propriety command the spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, to awake out of sleep and arise from the dead, to believe, repent, and be converted, &c. His word is quick and powerful; it is as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces; it kills and makes alive; it shall not return to him void, but shall accomplish that which he pleases and prosper in the thing whereunto he sends it.

4. This principle sets aside all use of means either in the hand of God or on the part of the creature. With respect to God it objects to his working upon men as rational creatures, or in a way suited to the powers and faculties he hath given them. He need not by means of his word instruct, convince, command, threaten, or allure them; because they are supposed to be dead in such a sense as if they had neither judgment, conscience, hopes, or fears, to be wrought upon by such means, till they are converted. With respect to the sinner himself, if such is his situation, he can use no means nor reap any benefit from them, because there is no suitableness in the means to the end. Besides, according to this doctrine his using means is not only useless but pernicious. He must not "consider his ways," think of his danger, attend to the divine calls, search the scriptures like the Bereans, or pray to God for divine illumination till once he knows he is a believer, lest he should add to his condemnation by establishing his own righteousness; as if the first thing that warranted or led men to seek after

God was the knowledge of their conversion; yet the publican seems to have had no such view of his state when he cries out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." I freely grant that none will search the Scriptures in earnest but he that believes that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him; but all this while he may not know that he is converted or a true believer: he may yet, like Cornelius, have to learn words whereby he may be saved; and it is his duty, like him, to be eager to hear them as the means of his salvation; for faith in Christ cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

5. *Lastly*, The objection seems to consider a *moral* or *spiritual* death in sin as in all respects answering to the *natural* death of the body. When the body is deprived of the animating spirit it differs nothing from a lump of dust or clay, in which case it cannot be the subject of instruction, commands, praise, or blame. Were spiritual death to be considered in this light, then it would follow that men in a natural state could not be sinners. They could receive no instruction or have any sense of right or wrong; neither could they feel the influence of any motives, having neither hopes, fears, nor affections to be wrought upon by them. In this case all means would be improper, because there is no suitableness or connexion at all between the means and the end: God uses no means but his own immediate power in quickening a dead body. In short this view of the matter would set aside all moral obligation upon mankind, and were it really to be believed, would obliterate all conviction of guilt. But men's consciences can never fall in with such speculations; these will now and then speak the truth let them reason as they will. The Scripture gives a very different view of the death in trespasses and sins. It consists,

(1.) In the *guilt* of sin, whereby they are under the sentence of death denounced in the law; from this death men are delivered when God quickens them together with Christ, forgiving them all trespasses, Col. ii. 13.

(2.) In the indwelling *power* and *dominion* of sin, whereby their minds are blinded and their hearts and affections alienated from the life of God and set upon opposite objects, Eph. iv. 18. In this sense they are dead while they live, 1 Tim. v. 6. Yet, notwithstanding this, the Scriptures represent man in his natural state as having a sense of right and wrong, and a conscience within him witnessing for God and his law, Rom. ii. 14, 15. that he is guilty in holding the truth which he knows in unrighteousness, not liking to retain God in his knowledge and in going on in all manner of wickedness, whilst he knows the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, Rom. i. 18, 28, 32. The Scripture also declares that men's guilt is aggravated in proportion to the means of instruction afforded them, and the warnings and calls given them, (see Prov. i. 24, 32, and many other passages;) and particularly in rejecting the evidence, calls, and invitations of the gospel, (see Matth. xi. 20, 25, xxiii. 34—39. John iii. 19—20. xiii. 46—49. xv. 22—25.) This evidently supposes that they are rational voluntary agents, capable of instruction, conviction, and exhortation, and so of being wrought upon as rational creatures by these means, otherwise their guilt could never be heightened by being proof against them. This kind of death, therefore, does not exclude means. Besides there is such a *suitableness* in the means which God hath appointed for quickening dead sinners as leaves men entirely inexcusable. If men are insensible and un-

concerned about their state, what can be more proper to awaken, convict, or alarm, than the account of their guilt and danger held forth in the Scriptures? If they are dead under a legal sense of condemnation, filling them with fear of the divine displeasure, what is more suited to give them life and to pacify their consciences than the gospel declaration of the divine good pleasure in the atonement, and the sufficiency of Christ's blood to cleanse from all sin? If they are dead through the blindness of their minds, sitting in darkness and in the region and shadow of death, what is better calculated to quicken and enlighten them than the light of life which shines in the gospel? If they are dead through the enmity of their hearts against God, and attachment to this present world, what can be more suitable to slay the enmity, reconcile the mind, and excite love to God, than the amiable manifestation he hath given of his character and love in the gospel? And what can be more effectual to disengage the affections from earthly things than the certain and glorious prospects which the gospel presents beyond death and the grave? Are men naturally inattentive to the gospel, or apt to suspect that they are not welcome to partake of its blessings freely? What can be more suited to rouse their attention or to ascertain their welcome than its pressing calls and alluring invitations and intreaties, which are addressed to all, without excepting the vilest and most worthless? And as these things influence men just according to their belief of them, what can be more powerful to beget faith than the divine evidence which the gospel exhibits for the truth of its testimony and promises?

Thus the gospel is the means of conveying life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, it being the wisdom and power of God unto the salvation of men; and hence we find the most wonderful effects ascribed to it, such as illumination, quickening, conversion, and regeneration, Psal. xix. 7, 8. 2 Cor. iii. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 3. And though the gospel cannot produce these effects without the Spirit of God, yet we are not to think of the influence of the Spirit abstract from the means, for he works by them upon the minds of men, and his province is to give them their proper effect.

Obj. 2d. "Although God may use means to bring men to faith and repentance, yet how can *unbelievers themselves* be commanded to believe, repent, be converted, &c. or enjoined to use any means for these ends? Will any man seek to believe what he knows nothing about? or what he hates or holds to be false? Will he strive to repent of that which as yet he does not perceive to be either criminal or dangerous? To suppose this would be altogether absurd and ridiculous; yet such commands, calls, and exhortations to unbelievers plainly proceed upon such suppositions."

*Ans.* It has been clearly shewn in the first part of this Essay that *God by his word calls all men every where to repent and to believe the gospel.* It is easy then to see upon whom this charge of absurdity must fall. Let men attend to it, that to set the Scripture calls in a ridiculous light, and then on this account to charge them with absurdity, is most highly profane. The absurdity here however lies only in the view of the objector, not in the calls of the Scripture. The word of God calls upon unbelievers to repent, believe, and be converted; but it never once

supposes, that any will comply, or seek to comply with these calls, while they abide in *absolute* ignorance, unbelief, aversion, and impenitence. God does not call any to believe without declaring what they are to believe, and exhibiting the evidence for it; nor does he command any to repent without setting before them their guilt and danger. This being done, it is supposed in the Scriptures, and surely most reasonably, that men are not now precisely in that very state in which they were before they heard, or knew any thing about the testimony of God, or their own perishing condition. It is supposed that such men have now received some information which they had not before, both with respect to their danger and the remedy for it; and that they are hereby rendered quite inexcusable if they should neglect so great salvation; which neglect must now be the effect of perverseness and aversion, and not of simple ignorance, John iii. 19. xv. 22—25.

To awaken, therefore, their attention to the evidence and important nature of its testimony, to remove their prejudices and gain upon their hearts, its doctrines are accompanied with calls, commands, expostulations, and intreaties to believe and repent, which are urged by the most alluring and alarming motives that can possibly be proposed to the human mind. Now wherein lies the absurdity of this? Is it not most reasonable and proper? Do not such commands and calls naturally arise from the doctrine itself and the manner of proclaiming it? To what purpose is the gospel-testimony with its evidence declared unto men if they are not called to believe it? Or why should their guilt and danger be set before them if it be not meant that they should repent? And if this

is the real meaning and language of declaring the doctrine and its evidence, why may it not be spoken out in express calls and exhortations?

As to "unbelievers seeking and using means to obtain faith and repentance," it may be observed that such unbelievers as have never heard of the salvation by Christ, or of the need they have of it, can never be supposed to seek faith and repentance, or to use any means for that end; because they are furnished as yet with no principles in their judgment which lead to this, or from which they can be exhorted. But there are various other classes of unbelievers who are not in this situation. They have heard the gospel and have it in their hands; and though they do not yet believe to the saving of their souls, yet they are hereby furnished with the means of knowledge, faith, and repentance; and they are entirely without excuse if they do not make a proper use of them. Such are called to *hearken* and to pay attention to the word of God, Isa. lv. 3. Acts ii. 14. vii. 2. xiii. 10. "For faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. x. 17. They are called to *search* the *Scriptures* with respect to the evidence of the gospel-testimony concerning Christ, John v. 39, as was exemplified by the Jews at Berea, and it was the means of bringing many of them to the faith of Christ: "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scripture daily whether these things were so: therefore, many of them believed," Acts xvii. 11, 12. Is there any absurdity in supposing that the important and interesting pretensions of the gospel-testimony may be so far perceived by an unbeliever as to induce him to give it a fair hearing, and lead him to consider its evidence? And

who will deny that God may in this way bring him to the faith as he did those at Berea? His mind indeed is naturally blind and averse to divine things; but the gospel-doctrine is mighty through God to remove his ignorance; its evidence his unbelief; and its motives his aversion. The word of God also furnishes men with the means and motives of repentance. It not only gives the clearest discoveries of the evil nature of sin and its dreadful consequences, but also of the mercy and grace of God through the atonement, to the most guilty. When therefore it calls all men every where to repent, it is surely meant that they should *consider* their ways, and seriously reflect upon their certain and awful consequences; that because of these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; and that except they repent they shall all likewise perish; but that on the other hand they should beware of giving themselves up to despair, seeing there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared, and plenteous redemption through the atonement; that therefore they should forsake their evil ways and thoughts, and turn to the Lord and pray God that their sins may be forgiven them, through the propitiation, for, *whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Here then we have both motives given and means prescribed for repentance; and though none will truly repent or even use the means, without some acquaintance with, and belief of the motives, yet as the call and the motives come to men at the same time, and are involved in each other, there is the greatest propriety in commanding men who are yet in a natural state to repent of their sins and turn unto God. So that there is no room

for the ridiculous supposition that men will strive to repent of that which as yet they do not perceive to be either criminal or dangerous, for they are called to consider their guilt and danger as well as the remedy, and so to repent. And they must be the more inexcusable in rejecting these calls, that there is scarcely an infidel to be found whose natural conscience will not in some measure correspond with the word of God both as to his guilt and danger.

Obj. 3d. It is common to exhort unbelievers to pray; "but with what propriety can unbelievers do *this?* Does not the Scripture say of such, 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed,' Rom. x. 14; and forbid them to think they shall receive any thing of the Lord, James i. 17. Indeed they have no ground to think so, since it is declared, 'That the sacrifice and prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord,' Prov. xv. 8. xxiii. 9. Does the Scripture command men to sin?"

*Ans.* Before I meet the objection directly, I would observe that prayer and worship are duties arising from the discoveries which God has made of himself in his works of creation and providence, and from man's relation to his Creator, and his dependence upon him for his being and support. The apostle shews that the heathens were inexcusably guilty in not glorifying God or being *thankful* to him, and in *worshipping* and serving the creature more than the Creator, Rom. i. 21, 25.; because the language of such discoveries of God to them was "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him," Acts xvii. 27. The Scripture therefore does not condemn such worship as sinful

but on the contrary, condemns men for witholding it from its proper object. The gospel does not set aside any of the natural grounds of worship but rather establishes them, and gives such new discoveries of God and of the certain and successful way of approaching him as reason or nature could never suggest. Now in answer to the objection let it be observed,

1. That the Scripture commands the *wicked and unrighteous* to seek the Lord while he may be found, to *call* upon him while he is near, Isa. lv. 6.; and Peter exhorts Simon Magus, though he discovered him to be yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, to *pray God*, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him, Acts viii. 22. That the wicked are called and *commanded* to pray and call upon God is therefore a truth which can neither be denied nor explained away. Shall we then say that this is commanding them to sin? God forbid! If we cannot reconcile this with some other Scriptures let us humbly own our ignorance and not reply against the word of God. But there is no inconsistency in this matter, if we consider,

2. That though the wicked are commanded to pray to and call upon the Lord, yet they are not commanded to do so while *continuing* or *persisting* in their wickedness and unbelief, but only in the way of *repentance* and *turning* to the Lord. Thus the exhortation to the wicked to *seek the Lord and call upon him* is connected with and involved in the call to *forsake his way and unrighteous thoughts, and turn unto the Lord*, Is. lv. 7. Thus also Simon Magus is not commanded to pray in impenitency, but to *repent of his wickedness, and pray God*, &c. Repentance and prayer to God for mercy must necessa-

rily go hand in hand, and so the call to both comes to the wicked at once. This observation will explain how the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; it is the prayer of impenitency and hypocrisy that is meant, when men make a show of calling upon God and honouring him with their lips, whilst in the mean time they are going on and obstinately persisting in their enmity and rebellion against him: so it is said, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination," Prov. xxviii. 9. Accordingly the Lord frequently declares that he will not hear the prayers nor accept the religious services of the impenitent and incorrigibly wicked, and that they are offensive and nauseous to him, as being nothing but profane mockery and solemn deceit see Psal. l. 16, 23. Isa. i. 10, 16. lviii. 2. lxvii. 3. Jer. vi. 19, 20. vii. 21—29. Amos. v. 21—25. But all this is perfectly consistent with his calling the wicked to repent and apply to him for mercy; and if like the publican they comply with his call he will not despise their prayer.

With respect to Rom. x. 14, "How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" it shews that no man can or will call upon the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation in sincerity till he believe the gospel-testimony concerning him; and that he cannot believe that testimony till he hear it; for as it is none of the principles of natural religion, the faith of it must come *by hearing the word of God.* But when the gospel-testimony concerning Jesus is declared unto men, the command to *repent and call upon his name,* is as *extensive* as the command to believe on him, and is addressed *at the same time* to the same persons, viz. to all who hear the gospel, with a

promise, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; for the same Lord over all is rich (in mercy) unto all that call upon him," ver. 12, 13. And what is this invocation of the name of the Lord but the immediate and natural expression of that faith whereby men believe that he is mighty to save? The very command to believe in Christ is a tacit injunction to call upon him; and to suppose one believing on him for salvation, without applying to him for it, is quite contrary to the Scriptures which connect *believing* and *coming* to Christ inseparably together. If the command to call upon the name of the Lord be addressed only to believers, then none can warrantably call upon him till they know they are such, and by this means many would be kept at a distance till they find some favourable symptom in themselves to warrant their approach. Even the children of God themselves must, according to this, give over prayer when they begin to question whether they have truly believed or not.

Obj. 4th. "Calling and exhorting unbelievers tends to give a false view of the grace of God manifested in the salvation of men. It sets them upon some exertions to be, to do, or endeavour something good, in order to their acceptance with God. It leads them to think that *they* must begin the work and God will second their sincere endeavours; that they must first seek him before he will be found of them, and in short that their salvation must originate with themselves. Whereas the grace of God, manifested in the gospel, is not only absolutely sovereign and free, but preventing and unsolicited. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, Rom. ix. 16. It is to him

that worketh not, chap. iv. 5. It is preventing and unsolicited, for no man cometh unto Christ, except the Father first draw him, John vi. 44; and the Lord says expressly, "I was found of them that sought me not, I I was made manifest to them that asked not after me," Rom. x. 20. The scripture instances of conversion agree with this view of divine grace. Infants cannot be exhorted to repent, believe the gospel, or call upon the Lord, yet of such is the kingdom of God: and adults must enter therein, even as they do, Mark x. 14—17. The thief upon the cross found mercy in his last moments without being called or exhorted to do any thing that we read of, or any endeavours of his to comply with such calls, Luke xxiii. 43. Paul was surprised and overcome with divine grace when he was so far from expecting or seeking it, that he was in the height of his bloody career, persecuting the church, Acts ix. And that this was no extraordinary stretch of divine grace is evident from his considering himself as a pattern in this "to them who should afterwards believe on Christ to life everlasting," 1 Tim. i. 16.

*Ans.* It is freely granted that divine grace is absolutely sovereign, free, preventing, and unsolicited, as well in bringing men to the knowledge of the truth as in their election and redemption; but it is no way inconsistent with this to command and exhort all men every where to repent, believe the gospel, call upon the Lord, &c. *Inconsistent,* did I say? On the contrary, it is one of the methods of divine grace wherein the Lord is beforehand with men who were not seeking after him, and by which he draws their attention, and brings them to the actual enjoyment of his favour, who, till they were made

to hear his voice in these calls, were intent upon something else as the foundation of their hope and happiness. It is very remarkable that the calls to faith, repentance, and seeking the Lord, are ever founded on and accompanied with the clearest declarations of the freedom of divine grace. Thus, in Isa. lv. 1. when men are called to come and partake of the gospel-blessings they are at the same time told that these blessings are without money and without price. Shall we say that this declaration is overturned by the following calls in that chapter, to seek the Lord, to forsake their wicked ways and thoughts, and turn unto the Lord, &c.? In the parable of the marriage-feast the King sends forth his servants, saying, "I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are now ready." Here is a full and free salvation declared, where every thing the sinner needs is furnished and ready for his immediate use without any labour of his; and shall we think it the less free, because it his added, "Come ye unto the marriage; or because the servants are enjoined to "compel them to come in?" Matt. xxii. 4. Luke xiv. 23. The apostles declared unto men the word of reconciliation, viz. "that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;" and that "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 18—21. No words can more emphatically set forth the absolute freedom of divine grace. Who among all the human race was beforehand with God in *meriting, soliciting,* or even *conceiving* that God should reconcile the world to himself, by making Christ a sin-offering? None could suggest the expedient, direct its execution,

or so much as know any thing of it, till God himself, of his sovereign mercy, both performed and revealed it, to the surprise, the wonder, and admiration of men and angels! The work of reconciliation, in as far as it respects the satisfaction of divine justice, is already com pletely finished by the Son of God, without the least concurrence or even consent of men; and this righteousness of God is declared in the word of reconciliation, as the sole and exclusive foundation of hope for the guilty. Now shall we say that the apostles, in their applications, overturned all this again, because with the very same breath they beseech and intreat men, in Christ's stead, to *be reconciled to God?* Can we think that they are directing men to establish their own righteousness by doing any part of that work of reconciliation which Christ hath already finished? or shall we think that Christ's work is imperfect, because it still leaves room for such calls and exhortations? Far be it! As well might we think that in the marriage-supper all things were not *ready* or *free* for men's immediate use, because they were *invited to come* and partake of it freely! When men are exhorted to be reconciled to God, it proceeds upon this ground, that God is already well pleased, through the atonement made by his beloved Son, for the sins of the guilty; and it imports that men should *believe* this, and be influenced by it to *repent* of their enmity and rebellion against him. They are not called to reconcile God to them by satisfying his justice, but to be themselves reconciled unto God, who hath already obtained full and complete satisfaction to himself from his own Son: and does not such an exhortation perfectly consist with, and naturally arise from, the grace which appears in the atonement? Indeed,

it would have been perfectly inconsistent, not only with the holiness of God, but with the riches of his free grace, to have dispensed with faith and repentance, and to have promised salvation to the unbelieving and impenitent, because in the very nature of things men can have no happiness in, nor enjoyment of, that which they neither believe nor love.

I shall now consider the scripture texts quoted in support of this objection, and shew that none of them give such a view of divine grace as supersedes the necessity of the gospel calls to all men every where to believe, repent, call upon the Lord, &c.

In Rom. ix. the apostle is speaking of the rejection of the greater part of the natural seed of Abraham, who were formerly the peculiar people of God, and of God's choosing only a remnant of them, together with the Gentiles, to be partakers of his promise by the gospel. Upon this subject he answers two objections. One against the *faithfulness* of God in his promise to the seed of Abraham, which he shews did not respect his natural seed as such, but his spiritual seed of Jews and Gentiles, who believe in Jesus according to God's purpose of election. The other objection is against the *righteousness* or justice of God for making such a difference among men, as to choose some who are not better, and reject others who are not worse than other men are. This he answers by resolving it entirely into God's sovereignty, who has a right to shew mercy to, or with-hold it from, whom he pleases, without injustice to any, since all justly deserve to be rejected; and for this he cites the Lord's words to Moses, asserting this prerogative, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion

on whom I will have compassion." Upon which he observes, "So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" *i. e.* the purpose of God according to election is not influenced by any one's own free will, good desires, or diligent endeavours, these being *effects*, not *causes*, of God's choice; but it originates solely in the sovereign will and pleasure of God, who shews mercy to whom he will, and for reasons found in himself, not in them. But all this is perfectly consistent with his commanding all men every where to believe, repent, call upon him, &c.; for this is one of the ways whereby he brings into effect his sovereign purpose of grace respecting his elect. Grace is not the less sovereign and free that it admits of means in bringing men to the knowledge and enjoyment of it. *Faith* cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; yet it is the gift of God's sovereign grace. *Repentance* is wrought in men by means of the doctrine, calls, and motives of the word; yet it is God who, of his sovereign good pleasure, grants unto sinners repentance unto life. *Prayer* is influenced by a sense of need, and a belief that there is access to, and mercy with God, that he may be feared; yet it is God who pours out the Spirit of grace and supplication on whom he will, and who causes them to approach unto him that they may obtain mercy. It should be carefully noticed that the Scriptures set aside the *willing* and *running* of men only in certain respects, viz. as anticipating, meriting, procuring, or influencing the grace of God in their election and effectual calling; but it admits of both *willing* and *running*, as effects of God's grace in their calling, and urges them as duties. In the very act of

calling them by his sovereign grace he makes them *willing* in a day of his power: he works in them both to *will* and to do of his good pleasure, so that they are made to *will* and run in obedience to his call, whilst others like Pharaoh are hardened and resist it; and the apostle shews that in this respect, as well as in election, God manifests the sovereignty of his grace, having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardening whom he will, ver. 18. That is, suffering them to continue in their unbelief and impenitence.

Rom. iv. 5. "But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The apostle is here speaking of the justification of the ungodly. Having proved that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin, and subject to the judgment of God, he shews that it was impossible for any of them to be justified by the works of the law; but that all who believe are justified freely by God's grace, without the works of the law, through the redemption that is in Christ; *i. e.* through his laying down his life as a ransom for them to divine justice, to procure the remission of their sins. Justification, therefore, is not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth in the work of Christ as all-sufficient for that end. But how does this doctrine militate against calls and exhortations to unbelievers? Did Peter overturn the doctrine of free justification by faith when he exhorted the unbelieving Jews to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out? Acts iii. 19. Does he there direct them to do any part of that work which Christ had finished for the justification of the ungodly? or lead them to think that their faith, repentance, and conversion were to

make an atonement for their sins? Some seem to consider faith, repentance, and conversion, to be equally opposed to free justification, as the works of the law are; but it is demonstrably evident from the whole of the New Testament, that the apostles were of a very different mind. They commanded and exhorted all men every where to believe in the name of Jesus Christ, to repent and be converted for the remission of sins, Acts ii. 38; that their sins might be blotted out, chap. iii. 19; that they might receive forgiveness of sins, chap. xxvi. 18; and declared unto them that except they repented they should all perish. This shews that they looked upon faith, repentance, and conversion, to be perfectly consistent with free justification without works, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But they never speak in this manner of the works of the law: on the contrary, when the Judaisers taught the disciples that except they were circumcised, and kept the law of Moses, they could not be saved; the apostles immediately took the alarm, and declared that this doctrine was entirely overthrowing the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had received the Gentiles without the works of the law, granted unto them repentance unto life, and purified their hearts by faith, Acts xv. 1, 5, 8, 9, 11. xi. 18. And Paul writing to the Galatians on this subject, says, that if they were circumcised they thereby became debtors to do the whole law; Christ was become of no effect to them who were seeking to be justified by the law; they had fallen from grace; and as many as were of the works of the law were under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. v. 34. It is therefore an unscriptural refinement upon divine grace, and contrary to the doctrine of the apostles to class faith and repent-

ance with the works of the law, and to state them as equally opposite to free justification. Indeed those who conceive of faith as a work, or some strenuous actings of the will and affections to obtain justification, can have no idea of God's justifying the ungodly without works; but faith is opposed to works in this matter; and though neither faith nor repentance are the procuring cause of a sinner's justification, any more than the works of the law are, (and who that really believes and repents will imagine that they are?) still, however, the latter is opposed to free justification, the former not. To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but real faith and repentance corresponding exactly with the manifestation of divine grace, as freely justifying the guilty through the atonement, are in their very nature opposite to self-dependence, and lead men to glory only in the Lord.

John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." This text shews that no man can be beforehand with God, nor prevent his grace by coming first of his own accord unto Christ; every proper view of and desire after Christ which takes place in the human mind are effects of the Father's preventing grace, whereby he draws men unto him. But this is so far from setting aside the invitations, calls and exhortations of the gospel to all men, that, on the contrary, it establishes them. Our Lord shews that this drawing of the Father is by divine teaching: "It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me," ver. 45. Now by what means does he teach men so as to draw them to Christ?

Is it by his Spirit abstract from the word? or is it by his Spirit co-operating with the word, and making its doctrines, motives, calls and invitations, effectual to that end? The last surely is his method of drawing men unto Christ.

Rom. x. 20. "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me." Isaiah adds, "I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name," chap. lxvi. 1. This passage respects the calling of the Gentiles and rejection of the incorrigible Jews. The Gentiles are termed a nation that was not called by the name of the Lord, *i. e.* they were not his particular people as Israel were, but were without God and without hope in the world. In this situation when they had no proper knowledge of the true God, no desires after him, and did not once think of seeking, worshipping, or serving him, but on the contrary were bowing down to dumb idols of their own invention; in this situation the Lord, out of his free, sovereign, preventing, and unsolicited grace, sent his gospel into their benighted regions, proclaiming peace by Jesus Christ and manifesting himself unto them as the just God and the Saviour. Thus he was found of them that sought him not; and made manifest unto them that asked not after him. But was he so found of them as to supersede the gospel calls and exhortations to faith, repentance, and conversion? By no means. This very passage tells us that his language to them in the gospel was, "Behold me, behold me," Isaiah lxv. 1; agreeably to what he says in another place, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else;" chap. xlv. 22. And is not

this a call to faith? They were also called to *repentance;* for Paul declares that he preached unto them repentance towards God, as well as faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ; he also tells them that "the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. 30; and he "preached unto them, they should turn from their vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth," &c. chap. xiv. 15. In the parable of the marriage-supper, the Gentiles are represented by *those among the highways and hedges.* How was the Lord found of them when they were not seeking him? was it not by sending out his servants to invite them to a supper, of which they had no previous knowledge or expectation, and by accompanying the gracious message with the power of his Spirit, opening their eyes and inclining their hearts to comply with the invitation?

Here I would have it carefully noticed that the Lord is found of men, both *before* and *after* they seek him. He is found of them *before* they seek him by sending them his word, and thereby awakening in them a sense of their guilt and danger, revealing unto them the remedy and exciting their desires after it, causing them to hunger and thirst after righteousness. In this sense he is found of them that seek him not; for men will never seek after any thing of which they have no knowledge nor any desire after, or prospect of obtaining. But he is also found of men *after* they seek him, or in consequence of their doing so, when from a sense of their need, and a belief that there is forgiveness with God, and plenteous redemption through the atonement, they are excited and encouraged to draw near unto him, like the publican,

that they may obtain mercy. To such *seeking* men are called: "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near," Isaiah lv. 6; and of such seekers he promises to be found, "for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him, for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," Rom. x. 12, 13. He is found of them who thus seek him in a sense in which he was not before, viz. by giving them a sense of pardon in their consciences, shedding abroad his love in their hearts, making them grow in grace and in the joyful hope of his glory; for these purposes he gives the Holy Spirit to them who ask him.

These two ways in which the Lord is found are exemplified in the case of the prodigal son; by which our Lord sets forth the calling of the Gentiles. He had gone far away from his father's house, wasted his substance with riotous living, was reduced to servitude and want, and was even perishing with hunger. In this situation the Lord was found of him when he sought him not; for who else was it that made him come to himself—convinced him of his perishing condition—let him see the plenteous provision that was in his father's house—made him form the resolution of returning to his father, humbly confessing his sin, and begging to be made as one of his hired servants, being no more worthy to be called his son? The Lord was also found of him in consequence of his seeking him. Under the influence of faith and repentance he arises and comes to his father. Mark the gracious reception! "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the

son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: but the father said to his servants. Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again: he was lost, and is found," Luke xv. 11—25. Thus, in forsaking his wicked ways and thoughts, and returning unto the Lord he had mercy upon him, and abundantly pardoned him. In seeking the Lord, he found such a special manifestation and experimental enjoyment of his love as far exceeded all his expectations: so that he must have been affected by it, like the Psalmist, Psal. xxxii. 1—6, and ciii. 1—14.

With respect to the scripture-instances of conversion, none of them are inconsistent with calls to it. Infants, indeed, can neither believe, repent, nor call upon the Lord; and consequently can with no propriety be exhorted to these things. But it does not follow from this that adults are equally incapable of instruction, calls and exhortations. And though our Lord says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Mark x. 15. Luke xviii. 17, yet he does not mean by this that they are to receive the kingdom without faith, repentance, conversion, or any concern about it more than is to be found in an infant: on the contrary, the resemblance to little children which he intends, consists in their humbling themselves and being converted (see Mat. xviii. 3, 4.) from their pride, self-righteousness, worldly ambition, envy, and malice. This is not the only place where the

resemblance of little children is opposed to such dispositions. (See Psal. cxxxi. 1, 2. 1 Cor. xiv. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.) And our Lord's words on this subject are a plain call to lay aside such dispositions.

As to the thief on the cross he must surely have heard or seen something about Jesus which led him to believe that he was Christ the Saviour; for faith cometh by means. It is certain he was effectually called to the Lord: his repentance appears in acknowledging the justice of his sufferings; his faith in confessing Jesus to be the Lord, and on the way to his kingdom, though expiring on the cross under every mark of indignity and disgrace. He believed that Jesus was able to save his soul though he had gone on in wickedness to his last moments. He accordingly calls upon him for mercy and receives a gracious answer. This is indeed a remarkable instance of the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace; and it is the more striking that it was the last hour of life. But will any affirm that grace would have been less sovereign and free had the Lord pleased to bring this man to believe, repent, and call upon him at an earlier period of his life, by means of the doctrine, calls, and invitations of the gospel? or is their any thing in this instance that militates against his calling all men every where to repent, believe the gospel, and call upon him before the hour of death.

Paul's conversion is another instance of free, sovereign and preventing grace; but there is nothing in the history of his conversion that overthrows the calls and invitations of the gospel. On the contrary Jesus himself calls him to faith and repentance, when he says unto him, by an audible voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why per-

secutest thou me? I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest, It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." In his conversion there are some things *common* to him with others. He was not seeking after the Lord, but going on in enmity and rebellion against him till the moment the Lord called him. He had rejected the gospel-testimony and resisted its evidence, calls and invitations, and was only the more exasperated the harder he was pressed by it, as is evident from his joining with the murderers of Stephen who spoke with such boldness, wisdom and evidence, and did such wonders, and miracles to confirm his testimony, that none were able to resist the spirit by which he spoke, Acts vi. 8, 10. Yet Paul still continued obstinate and persisted to kick against the pricks; and therefore he considers his obtaining mercy after all this as designed to give an illustrious display of Christ's long suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting; a pattern not of Paul's sin but of Christ's long suffering to him notwithstanding; not to encourage men's continuance in sin, but to encourage them to hope in the divine mercy, through Jesus Christ, and repent of their sins, though, like Paul, they have hitherto rejected and opposed the gospel; and that not merely by the latent unbelief and enmity of their hearts, but even by bloody acts of persecution; for he considers himself as the foremost or chief of sinners in this respect; and therefore as he obtained mercy in such circumstances, none after him have ground to despair. Though every man's sins may not be so atrocious and highly aggravated as Paul's before his conversion, yet all are in a state of enmity and rebellion against God, and liable to his wrath and curse,

and so cannot be saved but by the same sovereign, free, and unsolicited grace that saved Paul, and which takes not its measures by the comparative degree of men's guilt. But then there are some circumstances in Paul's conversion which are *peculiar* to himself; such as the Lord's appearing to him by the way, his speaking to him by an audible voice from the shining glory, his striking him blind with the glory of the light that surrounded him, &c. In these and such like circumstances his conversion is not a pattern; nor do we read of another instance like this in all the Scriptures. In these respects, therefore, it was extraordinary and miraculous, not in the Lord's ordinary way of dealing with men.

There are other circumstances in his conversion, which though they are not altogether peculiar to him, yet cannot be stated as the invariable and universal rule of the Lord's conduct in converting others; such as his being struck all at once, and that too in the very act of prosecuting his cruel designs against the disciples of Christ. Some no doubt are like him surprised in a moment, and brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, so that they can tell the very hour when the truth first struck their minds and brought them rest and peace; such as the three thousand converts by Peter's sermon: but there are others with whom the Lord deals in a more gradual and imperceptible manner. The Jews at Berea heard the apostles' doctrine with candour; it induced them to search the Scriptures daily to see whether the things they declared were so or not, and the consequence was that many of them believed. Thus they were brought to the faith not instantaneously but gradually; not when persecuting the church but searching the Scrip-

tures. Some, like Timothy, have known the Scriptures from their childhood, and have been very early and gradually brought to a view of their own state, and a discovery of the remedy, by which means they have escaped much of the corruption that is in the world; in which case it may happen that their convictions of guilt have not been so poignant and sharp, nor their relief so sensible and transporting as in the case of those who have been called at a later hour, and surprised and overcome all at once, in the midst of such wicked courses as are mentioned, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11; and consequently their transition from darkness to light has not been so discernible and striking. Many other cases might be mentioned to shew the Lord's various methods of bringing men to the knowledge of the truth; but they are all equally of sovereign free grace, and the effects produced are essentially the same in all, which are the main things that ought to fall under our consideration. The interesting question with us is, what our Lord puts to his disciples, "Do *ye now* believe?" If we can answer this in the affirmative we ought not to perplex ourselves or others respecting the process he observed in opening our eyes; it is enough that we know this one thing, that whereas we were blind now we see; and that this is the doing of the Lord. Nor are we to limit the Lord's method of dealing with men, either by our own experience or any other particular instance whatever, seeing he is sovereign in his methods of working as well as in their issue and result. In this as well as in other repects it may be said, "His ways are past finding out." Yet all who know his grace in truth, will with the strongest conviction acknowledge, as well in their own particular case as in the

general view of his conduct to the whole redeemed company, "That of him, and to him, and through him, are all things;" and accordingly give him the glory.

To conclude: none of the scripture instances of conversion furnish the least argument against the gospel-calls to faith, repentance, &c. The most of them were in consequence of calls: see Acts ii. 36—42. xiii. 38—44. xvi. 31—35. xvii. 30, 34. Some of them were attended with peculiar circumstances; and there are other circumstances which, though not peculiar, are yet not to be found in every scripture instance of conversion. And from what has been said, upon the whole it appears, that these calls are not only consistent with but subservient to the sovereign, free, and unsolicited grace of God, in men's conversion, as well as in their election before the world began, and redemption by the work finished by Christ on the cross.

Obj. 5th. "As God hath not elected all mankind, and as Christ hath not died for all who hear the gospel, how can we suppose that he calls all to faith and repentance, and invites them to partake of salvation?"

*Ans.* Consider in the *first* place, that although God does not intend to save all mankind, yet it is the *duty* of all who hear the gospel to repent and believe it, and their sin to do otherwise, and that independent of any consideration of God's secret design or purpose. His secret purpose belongs to himself; it is his revealed will that constitutes our obligation, and is the rule of our duty towards him. God's secret purpose does not diminish the guilt of sin; neither does it diminish or increase the obligation to duty; so that whether men are elected or not,

it is equally their duty to repent and believe the gospel: and they are therefore properly called to do so.

2dly. All who *believe* the gospel shall be saved. This is the promise of God, and is therefore his revealed purpose: "This is the will of him who sent me," said Jesus, "that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day," John vi. 40. If, therefore, it is a truth that all without exception who believe shall be saved, then it must be proper and consistent that all, without exception, should be called to believe, and so invited to partake of a free salvation; for Christ says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

3dly. If the calls and invitations of the gospel were not addressed universally to all who hear it, but restricted to the elect, then none could warrantably obey these calls till they knew that they were elected: but it is impossible for them to know this till they obey the call. The elect must believe upon the common grounds laid for all men, and not upon any thing peculiar to them as elect; and so the gospel calls and invitations must be *universal;* and must respect men merely as sinners for the sake of the elect themselves, though to them only they are made effectual.

A

# REPLY

TO

# SOME ANIMADVERSIONS

ON THE

FOREGOING ESSAY.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your Animadversions on the foregoing Essay, I shall be very short.

You "freely own, that unbelievers should be exhorted to belief, and plied with every scriptural motive to flee from the wrath to come."—If you freely admit this, you must also agree with the whole design of the Essay, which was solely intended to establish that single point. But then you say, you "would not plead any supposed ability in the creature as a foundation for these calls, but hold them in the strictest connection with this grand truth, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." In this you are certainly right; but why suppose that I found these calls on the creature's ability to comply with them, and that independent of the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace? You know, that man's *moral* inability, as well as the sovereignty of divine grace, are clearly maintained in the Essay. (See p. 10, 11, 12, 21, 22, &c.) The consistency of both these with the gospel-calls to unbelievers is shewn at large; and nothing is denied but that kind of *physical* or *natural* inability which would

render men excusable, and afford a just objection against these calls.

You "cannot see how the delusions of Antichrist, to which surely the difference between the present and the apostolic times must be attributed, can make any difference as to the situation of men before God."—If by *situation of men before God,* you mean *more acceptable* to him, such a sentiment never entered into my mind. To have answered this part of my remarks properly, you should have said, not that the *delusions* of Antichrist (for of these I say nothing), but that the *privilege* even of divine revelation itself does not aggravate the guilt of those who reject it. I affirm that it does, and you seem to do the same: Wherein then lies the difference?

You repeat your "hearty agreement with the leading design of the first part of the Essay upon the gospel invitations, calls, and exhortations, to men in a state of unbelief; and would not be thought to deviate from this sentiment in any observations that may follow."—I cannot help thinking that you deviate from this sentiment in some of your observations; though I believe you may not be conscious of this, nor intend to contradict youself.

But "you are humbly of opinion, that these exhortations might have been more immediately grounded upon, and connected with the free and sovereign grace of God."—I have shewn in my Essay, that the gospel-invitations, calls, and exhortations, are effects of God's grace to sinners; that they are means in his hand for bringing them to himself; and that he makes them effectual by his Spirit to the elect. Does not this view of them shew, that they are grounded upon, and connected with sovereign grace?

You explain Isa. lv. by Rom. x. 9—13. and tell me, "that calling on the name of the Lord often includes the belief of the truth, and must do so in Isa. lv. that calling upon the Lord is connected intimately with sovereignty, Rom. ix. and in Isaiah. lv. with free grace; that we find no calls to repentance in the New Testament, but in connection with the belief of the truth."—All this perfectly agrees with what I have written, and therefore ought not to be set in opposition to it.

You consider "Simon Magus to have been in a different situation from the world at large, which may account for the apostle's different mode of speaking to him; and that perhaps he had committed the sin which falls not under the promise of mercy."—And what is the inference from this? Is it that sinners at large must not, like him, be exhorted to *repent*, and *pray* to God for forgiveness through the propitiation? Surely this cannot be your meaning.

You say, "Acts xvii. 27. does not mean that the Gentiles could have found God to the saving of their souls, by their own natural endeavours."—I never said it meant this? but that passage proves, that seeking the Lord is a natural duty, which the gospel does not set aside, nor represent as sinful.

Upon the second part of the Essay, you say, "I would notice in the entry, that this part contains a number of objections against gospel-calls to unbelievers. I do not deny the *principles* or *doctrines* contained in these objections, but only the *conclusion* or *inference* drawn from these principles. I hope this will not be thought a nice distinction; for the apostles held firmly the doctrine of free sovereign grace, though they reprobated the use which many made of it. The first objection (p. 14. &c.)

can never be in the mouth of a believer; for if God requires nothing of us beyond the reach of our natural powers, then it must either be in the power of every man to believe the gospel, or else none are required to believe it."—Yet I have heard this objection in the mouth of professed believers; for even believers do not always argue rightly. Your answer to it, however, is just the substance of mine, though you labour to state some kind of difference; and therefore add,

"Yet part of this objection comes in against all such exhortations to believe, as are founded upon some supposed ability, or such connection being stated between seeking God and finding him, as is between work and hire; or even between the endeavours of a believer, and these endeavours being crowned with success."—But cannot the wicked be exhorted to believe, repent, and seek the Lord, and be encouraged to this by a promise of success, (Isa. lv. 6, 7.) without founding these exhortations on man's ability, or making the success to depend on human merit? Are such exhortations and promises always to be suspected of having a dangerous and self-righteous tendency? instead of taking such exhortations and promises in their plain and simple sense, must our main care always be to guard against some supposed self-righteous use of them, till we have explained away their whole force and spirit, and so distinguished and refined upon them, as to make men more afraid to comply with, than to reject them, lest they should be guilty of some exertion of mind or body, some good disposition or motion towards Christ, which is supposed to be the highest wickedness, and a despising the work of Christ.——You say,

"Every religious exercise of a man confessedly ignorant of the truth, is sinful, *intended* to supersede the work of Christ, or bring him within its reach, which is the same thing."—I cannot comprehend how a man entirely ignorant of the truth should perform religious exercises with an *intention* to supersede the work of Christ, of which he confessedly knows nothing; far less can I see how he should in that situation strive to bring himself within its reach. But I can easily comprehend how a man, *ignorant* of, or *disbelieving* God's righteousness, may go about to establish his own righteousness; and I can also see how the gospel itself may be perverted into a self-righteous scheme, so as to supersede the work of Christ as the sole ground of acceptance. But it does not follow from all this, that every religious exercise is absolutely sinful, till a man finds rest in the work of Christ. His *conviction* of guilt; his *fear* of the divine displeasure threatened against it; his *despair* of relief from his own ability or merits; his glimmerings of *hope*, arising from something he hath heard of the gospel, which keeps him from utter despair, his eager *desire* to see its evidence and import; his *attention* to the word, and dilligent *search* of the Scriptures for this purpose; and his *prayer* to God that he would enlighten his mind to understand them, &c.; such religious exercises as these, may have place in men before they enjoy rest in Christ; and shall we say they are absolutely sinful, or that they must necessarily be intended to supersede the work of Christ? or deny that God ever leads men in this way to the knowledge of the truth?

"Men are not saved (you observe) in a natural way, by the use of means, but in a supernatural sovereign

way, by the belief of the truth; faith cometh by hearing the word of God."—Here the use of means is opposed to the sovereign grace of God, and the belief of the truth; and yet faith is said to come by means of hearing the word of God. This needs no answer, because it answers itself. If faith come by reading, hearing, or searching the word, then salvation comes by these means. Is it therefore quite natural, and within the compass of human power? You add,

"Means suppose an end in view by the person using them, and that end more or less connected with the means. No man ignorant of the gospel can use means with a view to obtain the knowledge of the truth; all his endeavours, however sincere, are directed against the *one means* in the hand of God for saving guilty men."—This reasoning at first sight appears plausible, but it proceeds upon a mistake of the case. I do not suppose, that a person who is entirely ignorant of the gospel, or who has never heard of it, will use any means with a view to obtain the knowledge of the truth. The person we are speaking of is one who has heard the gospel, and has been called to believe on Christ for salvation; he is sensible he needs salvation, but doubts if the gospel is true. However, he is so struck with its importance, that he *uses the means* of conviction, in searching the Scriptures daily; and *the end* he proposes to himself in this is, to see "whether those things are so," (Acts xvii. 11.); and if it shall please the Lord to make the evidence of the truth to shine into his heart, then he is happy. Now where is the absurdity of this? and how are such "endeavours directed against the one means in the hand of God for saving guilty men?"

You say, "It is not your sentiment, that the warrant

for a man's calling acceptably upon God is the knowledge of his being a believer. It is the truth alone that warrants any man to draw near to God; and no man who does not believe it can see the warrant."—This does not solve the difficulty arising from the sentiment I oppose. Perhaps you will understand it better in the form of a syllogism. The command to call upon God is only addressed to believers; but I doubt my being a believer; therefore I doubt if the command is to me. The first proposition you strenuously maintain; the second you admit may be the case with a believer; until his faith works by love, or proves itself by its effects. The conclusion, therefore is unavoidable, and the person in this situation is deterred from calling upon God, lest he should aggravate his guilt and condemnation.

You are greatly alarmed at my introducing Cornelius as an example, because, you say, he is often adduced in favour of such doctrines as oppose the grace of God. If Cornelius was a man not in a state of favour with God, you think it cannot be shewn in his case, that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Then you give an account of Old Testament saints waiting for the consolation of Israel, — their flocking to John's baptism, — taking the kingdom of heaven by force,—knowing only the baptism of John,—and needing to be taught the way of God more perfectly, Acts xviii. 25. xix. 1—7; and having classed Cornelius among such, you ask, "If it is not intended to lead us to think that God has respect to human worth in salvation, how came the name of Cornelius at all to be mentioned on this subject? If your view of Cornelius's case was the same as already stated, surely his example could never more or less illustrate

the point in hand, viz. the calling of dead sinners, and total unbelievers, to credit the divine testimony, nor had any connection whatever with unbelievers using means with a view to obtain salvation."—Though I do not altogether agree with your account of Cornelius, which makes him not only a Jewish but a Christian proselyte; yet I believe he was a devout man, fearing God, with all his house; that he gave much alms to the people, prayed to God always, and knew the word which was published throughout all Judea, Acts x. 2, 37; as many others in those parts did, Acts ii. 22. I can even admit, that, like the twelve tribes of Israel, he instantly served God day and night, hoping in the promise of the Messiah to come, Acts xxvi. 7; though it was not yet revealed to him more than to the apostles themselves, that Gentiles, such as he was, were to be upon an equal footing, or fellow-heirs with the seed of Abraham in Messiah's kingdom, Eph. iii. 5, 6. Acts x. 28, 45. But notwithstanding all this, Cornelius had yet to *hear* the word of the gospel from Peter's mouth, and *believe* it, Acts xv. 7; he had to be told words whereby he and his house should be *saved*, chap. xi. 14; and, in his believing and receiving the Holy Ghost, the church at Jerusalem perceived that God had also to the Gentiles granted *repentance unto life*, ver. 18. And this is all that is said of any one who is converted to the Christian faith, either from Judaism or heathenism. None have the true Christian faith, but such as believe that the Messiah has come in the flesh—that Jesus of Nazareth is he—that he was delivered for the offences, and was raised again for the justification of his people—and that whosoever believeth in him shall receive the remission of sins, 1 John iv. 2. v. 1 John viii. 24. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

Rom. iv. 24, 25. x. 9. Acts x. 43. And it will be hard to prove, that Cornelius had this faith before the gospel was preached to him by Peter. But not to insist upon this, I know not what ground you have to imagine that I adduced Cornelius to shew that God has respect to *human worth* in salvation. My words are, "I freely grant that none will search the Scriptures in earnest, but those who expect to find some benefit from them; nor will any man truly call upon God, but he that believes that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; but all this while he may not know that he is a believer: he may yet, like Cornelius, be to learn words whereby he may be saved: and it is his duty, like him, to be eager to hear them, as means of his salvation; for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Here I neither affirm nor deny that Cornelius was a believer, (though I know he was a believer in the God of Israel), but only that he had yet to learn words whereby he might be saved, Acts xi. 14. and that he was eager to hear them, chap. x. 33. which is surely the duty of all to whom the gospel comes.

You say you "do not understand the nice distinction of *natural* and *spiritual* death. We are always in danger by our own wisdom to lose the simplicity of the truth. I understand spiritual death to imply as much deadness to the divine life, and as great an incapacity of enjoying it, as natural death implies ignorance of, and incapacity for enjoying natural life. I take it, that the Scriptures suppose, that it is as impossible for a man to quicken himself, in whole or in part, or to move one step nearer to God, as it is for a dead body to quicken itself again to natural life," &c.—The distinction between *natural* and *spiritual* death is not a nice one, the effects

of human wisdom, nor contrary to the simplicity of the truth; but is a plain scriptural distinction, and easily understood. Do you not understand, that a dead body can commit no sin, but a spiritually dead soul can; that the gospel is not suited to quicken a dead body, but it is suited to quicken a dead soul: that therefore, it is absurd to speak of preaching the gospel to dead bodies, but very proper to preach it to spiritually dead sinners, and to call them to faith and repentance? Now, this is all the use which I make of that distinction. I no where affirm, that the spiritually dead can quicken themselves, any more than the naturally dead: on the contrary, I all along maintain, that this is the work of God by means of his word and Spirit.

On the second objection, (p. 24.) you say, "I am not fond of any distinction being made between such unbelievers as have heard, and such as have not heard the gospel, except that the first class are *more guilty*, and shall receive the greater condemnation."—And what other difference do I make between them? Yet you express yourself as not fond of this distinction, though nothing is plainer in Scripture. But it is worth your while to consider more particularly how the circumstance of their having heard the gospel makes them *more guilty*. That you dislike the distinction altogether appears from what follows:

"I dread that sovereignty be somehow affected by this distinction; for it would appear to me, in reading that part of your Essay, a more natural thing for such *prepared persons* to be saved, than the thief on the cross, Paul, &c. who were overpowered in the midst of their sins, by a view of the sovereign goodness of God."—If by *prepared persons* you mean persons endued

with good qualifications, fitting them for salvation, there are none such supposed in my Essay. But if you mean those who have heard the gospel, and enjoy the means of salvation,. I know not why you should distinguish such from the thief on the cross, or from Paul. I think it not only more *natural*, but *scriptural*, that a man should be saved by means of the gospel, than without it, and by attending to it, rather than by shutting his ears against it: nor can I see how this affects the sovereignty of God, unless it can be shewn, that his sovereignty admits of no *means*, or does not open men's hearts to *attend* unto the gospel.

You think "the gospel comes not calling upon men to use means to partake of its benefits; it comes declaring the one thing needful, the one grand remedy, and calling upon men, on pain of damnation, to fly to it for refuge assuring them of safety in doing so."—This appears to me a contradiction, unless we suppose that *flying for refuge* means nothing; that it neither implies a consideration of our danger, a concern for relief, a belief of the remedy, nor an application for mercy. You say,

"I can see nothing out of the ordinary line of cause and effect, when I see a man diligently using means for faith and repentance, and by and by assuring me, that his search had been successful; at least whatever appears here, I can observe no sovereignty."—Can you observe no sovereignty in the conversion of the Jews at Berea, because they searched the Scriptures?—nor of Lydia, because she attended unto the things spoken by Paul? —nor of the prodigal son, because he found his father in seeking him? Were these, and such like instances, quite in the ordinary line of natural cause and effect, without any interposition of sovereign supernatural

grace? Do subordinate causes exclude the supreme? Is it inconsistent with sovereignty to work by means, or to stir up men to attend unto them, and then give them their proper effect?

"Many (you say,) are and have been thus employed; but I sincerely believe, when the gospel shines unexpectedly into their minds, they will find that they have been as criminally, not to say idly employed, as if they had been gratifying the lusts of the flesh, and following all manner of iniquity with greediness."—I admit, that it is highly, nay, damnably criminal, for any to reject the gospel, and to be seeking salvation independent of, or in opposition to, the one remedy therein exhibited; and that if the gospel should ever shine into the minds of such, they will be deeply convinced of their guilt in this respect. I can also admit, that every thing which hinders a man from having immediate relief from the gospel as soon as he hears it, is sinful and the effect of ignorance and unbelief. But to affirm, that a man who is concerned about the state of his soul, considering his ways, hearing the gospel, searching the Scriptures for its evidence and import, and praying to God to open his understanding to perceive it, is as criminally employed as if he were gratifying the lusts of the flesh, and following all manner of iniquity with greediness, appears to me extremely harsh, and of the most dangerons tendency. Let men reason and speculate as they will, their consciences must ever dissent from such a sentiment as this, whilst they retain any sense of right and wrong. I cannot therefore allow myself to think, but that the employment you thus reprobate is something of a very different nature from what I have stated.

You observe upon the third objection, (p. 28.) that

" prayer is no more a duty of natural religion, than the whole law ; but would it not be a criminal thing in a man to attempt to be accepted of God in prayer, except through Jesus Christ."—I shall answer this by another question: Would it have been criminal in the heathens to worship God as manifested to them in creation and providence, unless they had also known his character as fully manifested in Christ? If it would, why does the apostle blame them for withholding that worship? Rom. i. 21. But this subject is out of our way. We are upon the calls of the gospel to those who have heard it. The gospel both shews the way of access to God, and at the same time calls men to seek him. Is the command, therefore to the wicked, to seek and call upon the Lord for mercy, like the publican, of the same import with, Be perfect, Keep the whole law, This do, and thou shalt live? And was this Peter's meaning when he exhorted Simon Magus to repent, and pray to God, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him? I know you do not think so.

On the fourth objection, (p. 32,) you say, " I am far from classing conversion, faith, repentance, &c. with the works of the law. But men now-a-days retain scripture words, without the apostolic ideas affixed to them; and we may see as many establishing their own righteousness by what they term faith, repentance, conversion, regeneration, as by the works of the law ; and this error, as being more refined, is more dangerous than the other."

I freely grant all this: The gospel indeed has often been converted into a law of works, or scheme of self-righteousness, by being clogged with certain laborious conditions, under the names *of faith, repentance, conversion*, &c. to which sinners have been called, and

urged, in order to make their peace with God, or at least to qualify them for being justified through Christ. This has a most pernicious effect, as it hides or sets at a distance, the absolutely *free* and *immediate* ground of relief held forth in the gospel to the chief of sinners, (the belief of which alone can produce true repentance and conversion,) and leads a person to seek his comfort in the first instance from something to be wrought in, or done by him, instead of the finished work of Christ, from which he expects no relief, but through the medium of an opinion that he is a better man. This, I suppose, is what you have in view; and I highly commend your jealousy for the purity of the gospel: on this, I hope, we shall never differ; but I cannot see that any thing I have advanced on the Calls and Invitations of the Gospel, should have given the least ground for suspicion on this head.

Though many have affixed wrong ideas to scripture expressions, we are not on that account to disuse them, nor even to discover an apprehension that they have a tendency to mislead. Scripture words are the best adapted to convey the meaning intended by the Holy Spirit; and it would be an unwarrantable refinement on the doctrine of free grace, to scruple to make use of any expression which our Lord or his apostles used in calling sinners to believe, to repent, or to be converted. *

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ON THE

# DIVINITY AND SONSHIP

OF

# CHRIST.

THAT there is but one God is the first principle of all true religion. The Scriptures uniformly and expressly declare, that there is but ONE only living and true God, besides whom there is no other, Neh. ix. 6. Isa. xliii. 10, 11. This fundamental truth is emphatically proclaimed in the law, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. vi. 4. and Israel are strictly forbidden to acknowledge or worship any other God besides him, Exod. xx. 3. Deut. vi. 13, 14. Jehovah himself repeatedly declares that he alone is God, and that in opposition to the imaginary gods of the Gentiles: "Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God: I know not any." Isa. xliv. 8. "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me," chap. xlv. 5, 24.

The same inspired writings also reveal a *plurality* in the one Godhead or Deity. This seems to be intimated in the Old Testament by the plural word ELOHIM, which is a name given to the Creator of all things, Gen. i. throughout, and is connected with plural pronouns, such as, Let US make man in OUR own image," ver. 26. "Behold the man is become like one of US," chap. iii. 22.

Let US go down, and there confound their language," chap. xi. 6, 7. In the original many other plural names are given to the true God, though translators have expressed them in the singular form. Thus in the Hebrew we have *Holy ones*, Prov. ix. 10. *Creators*, Eccl. xii. 1. —*Makers*, Isa. liv. 5.—*Masters*, Mal. i. 6, &c. all which intimate a plurality in the one Deity. But it is only in the New Testament that we have a clear revelation of the number in this plurality. There we are informed that they are *Three*, and they are distinguished and manifested to us in the economy of redemption under the relative names of FATHER, WORD (or SON) and HOLY SPIRIT, Mat. xxviii. 19. 1 John. v. 7. Whatever be the foundation of these relative names, they unavoidably convey to us the idea of three distinct subsistents, and throughout the whole of the New Testament they are distinguished by every mode of speech by which we distinguish persons among men ; and as we have no single term better than the word *person* to express that distinction by, we may be allowed the use of it, though it may not in all respects apply to the distinction in Deity. As our ideas of personality originate in what we know of human persons, who, though possessed of one common nature, subsist *separately* and *independently* of each other, to conceive of the Divine Three as existing or subsisting in this manner, seems not reconcileable with their unity, and approaches to Tritheism.

That the Divine Three are one Jehovah, is declared Deut. vi. 4. " Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah;" which cannot mean that Jehovah is one Jehovah, but that Israel's plural Elohim is one Jehovah; and which is still plainer expressed in 1 John v. 7. " these

THREE are ONE." Agreeably to this Jesus says, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. It is therefore clearly revealed that there is both an unity and distinction in the Deity. The plural Elohim in the Old Testament is expressed in the New by the relative names of Father, Word and Holy Spirit, and these three are declared to be one, *i. e.* one Jehovah or Divine Being, as opposed to the many false gods of the heathen.

The unity and distinction of the Divine Three is a mystery which infinitely transcends all our limited powers to comprehend. If the works and ways of God are inscrutable by us, how much more must this be the case with regard to the manner in which he himself exists. Conscious therefore of our own ignorance, it becomes us to contemplate this subject not only with modesty and humility, but with the most profound reverence and godly fear, it being revealed as a matter of faith, not of curious investigation. When the glory of the Lord appeared on mount Sinai, the people were strictly charged "lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish," Exod. xix. 21. And though we cannot now, like them, transgress with our bodily sight; yet by unhallowed speculations we are in danger of rashly intruding into those things respecting the Deity which he has not thought proper to reveal, and which it is neither possible nor profitable for us to know, at least in our present state.

Men have, with great positivity, attempted to explain what *constitutes* the distinction among the eternal Three how that distinction *consists* with their being one; and in what *manner* and *order* they subsist in the Godhead: But they have in general bewildered themselves and

others, and darkened counsel by words without knowledge. Some have handled the personal distinction of the Divine Three in such a manner as to slide insensibly into the doctrine of three Gods, though the Scripture clearly declares there is but one. To avoid this, others have run into the opposite extreme of denying, or explaining away the revealed distinction in the Godhead, though we are expressly told the Father, Word and Spirit are three. Many hold that there is an original inequality or subordination of nature among the Divine Three, at least with regard to the Son; though it is declared that he thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6; and " that all men should honour him, even as they honour the Father," John. v. 23. But others maintain the equality of the Divine Three as to *nature*, though not as to their *persons*.

This last seems to be the most generally received opinion. They distinguish the Divine Three by what they call their personal properties, or rather by the different modes of their original existence in the Godhead. Their doctrine is, " That God the Father is of none, neither begotten nor proceeding: That the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; and that the Holy Ghost is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son." They admit, indeed, (at least some of them,) that the Son and Spirit exist *necessarily* and *co-eternally* with the Father, as light and heat are co-existent and co-eval with the sun their source; but they think that *self-existence* is not essential to the divinity of their persons, it being only a mode of existence peculiar to the Father, which, if ascribed to the Son and Holy Spirit, would convey the idea of three self-existent Gods.

I pretend not to know, far less to explain, the *manner* and *order* in which the adorable Divine Three subsist in, and possess the divine nature. That they do possess it is clearly revealed; and as the divine nature is one, it must be the same in all the Three, and perfect in each; because it admits not of degrees of perfection in *itself*, though it may in its *manifestation*. Nor are we to imagine that the Godhead is divided, and that each of the Divine Three possess a part of it; for that is inconsistent with the real divinity of any of them; because that which is imperfect or partial cannot be God.

Some who wish to maintain the self-existence of the Son, have attempted to reconcile it with his eternal generation, thus, "The Son hath no original of his Deity, as God he hath nothing derived, but existed of himself prior to his generation of the Father; but as a person in Deity, he derives his subsistence from the Father by an eternal and ineffable act of generation, whereby the same individual essence that the Father hath was communicated to him; and, from his being thus eternally begotten in his divine person, he is the Father's proper Son."

Upon this I observe, 1st. That when it is said that "the Son hath no original of his Deity," nothing is affirmed of him *as the Son* at all, nor can any thing be understood by it, but that the Deity hath no original, but existed prior to a distinction of persons.—2. It is said that "as God he hath nothing derived:" but I would ask, is the *divine essence* nothing? Is his *personal subsistence* in that essence nothing? Yet one is said to be communicated to him, and the other begotten.—It is said that "he existed of himself prior to his generation;" but what conception can we have of his existing of him-

self in the divine essence *prior* to that generation by which it is said to be communicated to him? Did he exist in that which as yet he had not? And what idea can we have of his existing at all without the essence, or his personal subsistence in it?—4. *Lastly*, He is said to "derive his personal subsistence from the Father by an eternal act of generation," and yet to "exist of himself prior to that generation." But a *derived subsistence* is inconsistent with *self-existence*; and if his generation was strictly *eternal*, it cuts out the idea of his *prior* self-existence, for nothing can be prior to what has no beginning. Such are the difficulties in which men involve themselves in seeking to be wise above what is written, and in attempting to explain the distinction of the Divine Three, with the manner and order of their eternal existence in the Godhead.

The word of God represents the person of the Father as sustaining the MAJESTY of Deity, Heb. i. 3. chap. vii. 1. And though it represents the Divine Three as co-operating in every work peculiar to God, whether in creation, providence or redemption, (John v. 17, 19. chap. xiv. 10. Mat. xii. 28.) yet it also intimates a certain *order* of operation among them. All things are said to be (ἐξ) *of* or *from* God the Father, as the original source and first mover; and to be (διὰ) *by* or *through* Jesus Christ, as seconding the Father's designs and bringing them into effect, 2 Cor. v. 18. Eph. iii. 9. and also *by* or *through* the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 20. chap. vi. 4. But whether this order of acting arises from any difference in the order and manner of their subsistence in the Godhead, or is purely economical and depending on the divine will, is a question to which, I think, no mortal ought to attempt a solution.

The real Godhead of Christ has been much disputed by many, and their chief arguments against it are drawn from the notion they have of his Sonship, which they think is expressive of the mode of his original existence, and so consider him as a generated or derived Being; consequently not possessed of the perfections peculiar to the Divine Being which are incommunicable. And it must be owned, that if he owes his original existence to his being begotten or generated, it will not be easy to avoid the conclusion. It may be proper therefore to consider,

I. The scripture PROOFS of the DIVINITY of Christ.

II. What is expressly revealed concerning his GENERATION and SONSHIP.

III. Answer some of the principal OBJECTIONS.

I. As to the scripture PROOFS of Christ's DIVINITY they are numerous and plain.

1. Every divine NAME is given to him, excepting such as serve to mark the other two personal distinctions. He is repeatedly and expressly called GOD. "Make straight in the desert a high-way for our God."—"Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." Isa. xl. 3—9. applied Mat. iii. 3.—"In the beginning was the Word—and the Word was God." John i. 1. "God was manifest in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. And that he is God in the strictest and most proper sense, and not as angels and magistrates are so called, is evident from other epithets which are joined with it, such as, "the mighty God," Isa. ix. 6.—"the great God," Tit. ii. 13. "Over all, God blessed for ever," Rom. ix. 5.—"the only Lord God," Jude, ver. 4. The incommunicable name JEHOVAH is given to him; "Prepare ye the way

of Jehovah," Isa. xl. 3. applied Luke i. 76. chap. iii. 4. "Jehovah our Righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. See also Isa. xlv. 22—25. with 1 Cor. i. 30. Phil. ii. 10.—"Jehovah of Hosts," Isa. viii. 13, 14. with 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. See also Isa. vi. 5. with John xii. 41. The name JEHOVAH is declared to belong exclusively to the true God. "Thou whose name ALONE is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth," Psal. lxxxiii. 18. and as it is applied to Christ, it proves him to be the true God.

2. Every *divine attribute* or *perfection* which is essential to God is ascribed to him, as—(1.) *Eternity;* "Thus saith Jehovah; I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God," Isa. xliv. 6. which Christ applies to himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," Rev. i. 8—17. chap. xxii. 13.—"Whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity," Mic. v. 2.—"In the beginning was the Word," John i. 1.—"And he is before all things," Col. i. 17—(2.) *Unchangeableness;* "Thou art the same," Heb. i. 12.—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," chap. xiii. 8.—(3.) *Omnipotence;* "The Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty," Rev. i. 8.—(4.) *Omniscience;* "We are sure that thou knowest all things," John xvi. 30.—"Lord, thou knowest all things," chap. xxi. 17.—"I am he who searcheth the reins and hearts," Rev. ii. 23.—(5.) *Omnipresence;* "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Mat. xviii. 20.—"He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him—we will come unto him, and make our abode with him," John xiv. 21—23.—"Lo I

am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 20.

3. Every *work* peculiar to God is ascribed to him.—(1.) *Creation:* Jehovah claims this as his peculiar and exclusive work; "I am Jehovah that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE, that spreadeth abroad the earth BY MYSELF," Isa. xliv. 24. But this work is ascribed to Christ. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made," John i. 3.—"For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him," Col. i. 16. So that his eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, Rom. i. 19.—(2.) *Upholding* all things: "By him all things consist," Col. i. 17.—"Upholding all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3.—(3.) *Raising the dead* is a work which God alone can perform, Rom. ix. 17. yet it is part of Christ's work. "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will," John v. 21.—(4.) *Judging the world* is also assigned to him: "He shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom," 2 Tim. iv. 1. Acts x. 42. But "God himself is judge," Psal. l. 6.

4. *Divine honour* and *religious worship* belong to him. All judgment is committed unto him; "that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father," John v. 23. Christians are denominated "them that call upon the name of Jesus Christ," Acts ix. 14—21. 1 Cor. i. 2. We find them actually doing so, 2 Cor. xii.

8, 9. 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17. and commending their departing spirits into his hands, Luke xxiii. 42. Acts vii. 49.—All the angels of God are commanded to worship him, Psal. xcvii. 7. with Heb. i. 6.—The whole intelligent creation in heaven and in earth owe him religious homage, and must confess that he is Lord, Isa. xlv. 22—25. with Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. and so he is represented as worshipped in heaven in conjunction with the Father, Rev. v. 8—14. Now, as it is written in the law, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him ONLY shalt thou serve," Mat. iv. 7. and as men are condemned for "doing service unto them which BY NATURE are no gods," Gal. iv. 8. it follows, that Jesus Christ is the Lord our God; and that not merely *by office*, as now exalted, but *by nature*, since he is the object of religious worship and divine service, which belong to God alone.

We have no other way to distinguish the true God from his creatures, but by his exclusive titles, attributes, works, and worship, all which are applied to Christ; and if these do not sufficiently distinguish him from all that is not God, then it must follow, either that we have no revelation as yet of the true God, or that the Scriptures, in applying the distinguishing characters of Deity to Christ, have a direct tendency to establish idolatry. We shall now consider,

II. What is expressly revealed concerning his GENERATION and SONSHIP.

While the Scriptures clearly establish the divinity of Christ's person, or that he is possessed of the divine nature and perfections in unity with the Father and Spirit, they also declare him to be *the Son of God*, and *the*

*only Begotten* of the Father, see Mat. xvii. 5. John i. 14. chap. iii. 16—18. 1 John iv. 9. Those who think he is termed *the begotten Son* in reference to the origin of his divine person, or to his being originally derived from the Father by generation, will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this with his personally possessing the very same Godhead or divine nature with the Father. Yet Dr. Owen affirms, "That whatever belongs unto the person of the Son, as the person of the Son, he receives it all from the Father by eternal generation—All the properties of the divine nature are communicated unto him, together with personality from the Father—Thus he receives, as his *personality*, so *all divine excellencies* from the Father."* No man can suspect Dr. Owen of having the least intention to favour Arianism; yet his words do not materially differ from those of Dr. S. Clarke, who says, "The Son is not self-existent, but derives his *being* and *all his attributes* from the Father as from the supreme cause."† Arians indeed deny that the Son is possessed of the same essence or divine nature with the Father; but they seem to be more consistent in this than those who affirm, that the person of the Son is absolutely *eternal*, and yet was originally *generated;* or that such properties of the divine nature as are confessedly *incommunicable* were notwithstanding *communicated* to him. True, they say his generation is *eternal;* but we can have no idea of his generation without conceiving of it as an act or event which took place at *some time*, however long it might be before the creation of the world; and if, to avoid this,

* Owen on the Person of Christ, chap. v.

† Clarke's Doctrine of the Trinity.

it should be said, that he was not begotten at *any time*, it is only saying in other words, that he *never was* begotten, which contradicts the plain testimony of Scripture.

I have already observed, that the word of God clearly reveals the eternity of his divine person, and ascribes to him the perfections and works peculiar to God. It also declares him to be the Son of God, his only begotten Son: but it no where says, that he was *eternally* begotten, that he is an *eternal* Son, or that his Sonship is *eternal*. Nor does it appear from the word of God, that the relations expressed by the names *Father* and *Son* are intended to teach us the manner and order of their eternal subsistence in the Godhead, or that the paternity of the one, and the sonship of the other, are coeval with, and essential to their personality.

As we cannot possibly know any thing of this subject but by revelation, we ought not to extend our inquiries or reasonings beyond what is expressly revealed. The manner or order in which the eternal Divine Three subsist in the Godhead is not revealed so as to fall within our comprehension; but it is clearly revealed that the names *Father* and *Son* have a foundation in the economy of redemption, and are expressive of the mutual *relation* which these divine persons bear to each other in that economy, according to the ancient promise, "I will be his FATHER, and he shall be my SON," 2 Sam. vii. 14. applied to Christ, Heb. i. 5.

If this can be shewn to be the case with regard to the name *Son*, it will also hold with respect to that of *Father*, for these relative titles imply each other. And,

I. One of these divine persons is called the *Son of God*, on account of his *incarnation*, or assumption of

the human nature into personal union with his divine person. The angel declaring to the Virgin Mary, that she should conceive in her womb, and bring forth that glorious person who should be called the *Son of the Highest*, describes his wonderful divine generation as follows: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; THEREFORE also" (διὸ καὶ, AND THEREFORE, or *for this cause*) "THAT HOLY THING which SHALL be born of thee, SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD," Luke i. 31, 32, 35. Here we are not left to our own reasoning or uncertain inferences. When the Scripture so expressly, and of purpose, gives us one reason of his being called the Son of God, it does not become us to turn it off by any preconceived notions, or by analyzing and dividing his person; but we should rest simply in the divine testimony. To say, that this is only giving a reason for the sonship of his human nature, is not sense; for sonship does not apply to a *nature*, *genus*, or *kind*, but to a *person* or individual subsistent in a nature. Christ is not a *human person*, that he should be called a Son as such; for this would make him to have two persons, a divine and human. He has but one person which is divine; and which, on account of its personal union with his manhood, is here called the Son of God. It is surprizing to see how men will shift their ground to support a favourite point. Sometimes they will maintain that he is the Son of God *only in his divine person* abstract from humanity; but when the Scripture, as in this place, gives a plain reason why he is called the Son of God, then they flatly contradict themselves, and apply the name, Son of God, *solely to his human nature*. The

question, however, comes shortly to this, What was that holy thing which was born of the Virgin? Was it simply a human nature, or a divine person incarnate? The Scripture answers this directly, and tells us, that the Son, which the Virgin conceived and brought forth, is *Emmanuel* (*i. e.* God with us,) Isa. vii. 14. with Mat. i. 23.—that the child born, and Son given is the *Mighty God*, Isa. ix. 6. even the Saviour Christ the *Lord*, Luke ii. 11. It was in this conception and birth, that the *Word* was made flesh, or took upon him the seed of Abraham, John i. 14. Heb. ii. 16. and so that holy thing born of her was no less a person than *God* manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Now, if such was the person born, then this passage gives the reason not merely why the *human nature alone*, but why his *whole person*, now constituted of both natures, is called the Son of God.

To enter into a curious disquisition on the generation of this divine person, I consider as highly profane: but the Scripture hath left us at no loss as to the thing itself, and hath expressed it in such language, as is most proper for our conception of it. In the above passage, the Holy Ghost is said to come upon the Virgin, and the power of the Highest to overshadow her; and as the effect of this, she is said to be "with child of the Holy Ghost," Mat. i. 18. and that "that which is (γεννηθεν) begotten* in her is of the Holy Ghost," ver. 20. This shews us how he is the *only begotten* of the Father in a sense peculiar to himself; and that is that *new thing* which God promised to create in the earth, Jer. xxxi. 22.

* Γενναω signifies to beget, not *conceive*. A woman's *conceiving* is expressed by other words, such as εν γαστρι εχω, Mat. i. 18.—κοιτην εχω, Rom. ix. 10—συλλαμβανω, Luke i. 24, 31, 36.

for never was a person so constituted or so begotten before, nor ever will be.

If we view this as only a miraculous conception of his human nature, we perceive not the chief glory of this great mystery of godliness, *viz.* the constitution of the person of Emmanuel by the union of the divine and human natures. In producing this, the joint agency of the Divine Three was exerted—The *Holy Ghost* comes upon the Virgin — The power of the *Highest* overshadows her; and so Christ is called the Son of the Highest, ver. 32. by which we are to understand the Father; for Christ addressing the Father, says "A body hast thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5. Lastly, the eternal *word* (επιλαμβανεται) taketh upon him, or taketh hold of that human body and soul thus prepared for him as his own proper soul and body, so that it became *himself*, Heb. ii. 16. and the result is, that the person thus constituted is the only begotten Son of God. Though the eternal and unchangeable Word did not hereby cease to be what he was before, yet we are warranted to say, that he became what he was not before, for he was hereby *made flesh*, in which he displayed his glory, the glory as of the *only begotten* of the Father, John i. 14. Thus it was that God's Son was *made* of a woman, Gal. iv. 4.—*made* of the seed of David according to the flesh, Rom. i. 4. and this is the plain Scripture account of the generation of the Son of God; from which it appears, that his sonship lies neither in his divine nor human nature, separately considered, but in the union of both in his one person; and so the begetting of him as a Son, must be the constituting of that union.

2. Christ is also called the Son of God on account of his being *begotten from the dead*, and *constituted heir* of all things, having all power in heaven and in earth vested in him, Rev. i. 5. Heb. i. 2. Mat. xxviii. 18.

In the covenant of royalty which God made with David, he promised, "I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels—I will be his FATHER, and he shall be my SON," 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13, 14. This promise literally respected Solomon in the first instance, for to him David expressly applies it, 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10. chap. xxvii. 5, 6. But in what sense could Solomon be the son of God? For understaning this, let it be observed, that God was the King of Israel in a special and peculiar sense, the government being a Theocracy, and he made Solomon his son and heir by exalting him to sit on the "throne of the kingdom of Jehovah over Israel," 1 Chron. xxviii. 4. and by supporting him in it, ver. 7. In this sense, he made him his "first-born higher than the kings of the earth," Psal. lxxxix. 27. giving him, as such, the excellency of power, Gen. xlix. 2. Now this sonship of Solomon was a type of the Sonship of Christ as raised from the dead, and exalted to his heavenly throne, and so serves to illustrate it. For Christ is that notable Seed of David whom this promise ultimately respected, as is clear from the succeeding prophecies which refer to it, Isa. ix. 6, 7. chap. xi. 1—11. chap. lv. 3, 4. and from the direct application of it to Jesus in the New Testament, Heb. i. 5. Now this view of Christ's sonship imports two things:

(1.) His being *begotten from the dead*. So David, (as Peter informs us) understood God's "oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he

would RAISE UP Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before, spake of the RESURRECTION of Christ, that his soul was not left in hades, neither his flesh did see corruption." Comp. Psal. cxxxii. 11. and xvi. 10. with Acts ii. 30, 31. Paul also declares, that God, in RAISING UP JESUS AGAIN, hath fulfilled the promise made unto the fathers, and particularly what is written in Psal. ii. 7. "Thou art MY SON, this day have I BEGOTTEN thee," Acts xiii. 32, 33. which shews, that he is God's BEGOTTEN SON in respect of his resurrection. To this event he also applies the promise in Isa. lv. 3. which refers to the covenant made with David; "As concerning that he RAISED HIM UP FROM THE DEAD, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the (*τα ὁσια*) sure mercies of David," ver. 34. To the same purpose he likewise cites Psalm xvi. 10. "Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou wilt not suffer thine (*τον ὁσιον*) holy one to see corruption," ver. 35. From all which it is evident, that Christ is the BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD in respect of his resurrection from the dead to an immortal life; and in this respect he is "the beginning of the creation of God," Rev. iii. 14. or the FIRST-BORN of all the children of God, as they are the children of the resurrection, Luke xx. 36. who also are waiting for this adoption or sonship, to wit, the redemption of their body, Rom. viii. 23.

(2.) The other thing imported in this view of Christ's sonship is, the *supreme dominion* and *power* to which he is exalted in consequence of his resurrection, as God's first-born Son and heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. To this his death and resurrection were a necessary introduction; "For to this end Christ both DIED, and ROSE, and

revived, that he might be LORD both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9. We have noticed that God promised to David to set up his seed after him, and to establish the throne of his kingdom for ever, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. This promise was renewed long after David and Solomon's days, Isa, ix. 6, 7. and is applied to Jesus by the angel when foretelling his birth; "He shall be great, and shall be called the SON OF THE HIGHEST; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end," Luke i. 32, 33. Here we see that his being called the SON OF THE HIGHEST imports not only his *incarnation* (as we have already observed upon verse 35.), but also his *greatness* and *dominion*, as his Father's heir in that kingdom which was typified by the kingdom of David. So also in Psal. ii. he is declared to be God's SON whom he hath BEGOTTEN, ver. 7. not merely in *raising him from the dead*, but also in *exalting him to the kingdom*, and *granting him the inheritance* as his heir, ver. 6, 7. and thus the promise to David was fully accomplished, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my son, 2 Sam. vii. 14. Accordingly, the apostle adduces both these texts to prove that Christ is exalted far above angels in his risen and glorified state, as the Father's royal Son and heir; his words are—" when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by INHERITANCE OBTAINED a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art MY SON, this day have I BEGOTTEN thee? And again, I will be to him a FATHER, and

he shall be to me a SON," Heb. i. 3, 4, 5. He also cites the first of these passages to prove Christ's appointment to the priesthood, "So also, Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee," Heb. v. 5. If Christ's sonship did not infer his priesthood, this text would be nothing to the purpose; but as the priesthood, as well as inheritance, belonged originally, by right of primogeniture, to the first-born, and as the Levites, by a special law, were only substitutional priests, instead of all the first-born males among the children of Israel, (Num. iii. 41, 45.) so God's declaring Jesus to be his BEGOTTEN SON, his *First-born* from the dead, (Col. i. 18. Heb. i. 6.) was in effect to declare him high priest in his glorified state, after the power of an endless life; and so is equivalent to what "he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," ver. 6. with Psal. cx. 4. In this sense therefore, Christ is the Son of God by that very same dispensation whereby he was constituted first-born and heir of all things, or made king and high priest.

The amount of the whole is this, That Christ is the Son of God as the Word made flesh—as the first-born from the dead—and as the Father's heir in the kingdom and inheritance.

II. Having thus briefly stated what I take to be the scripture view of the generation and sonship of Christ, I proceed to confirm it a little farther from the Scriptures, by which alone we know any thing about it. And,

1. All the passages of the Old Testament which

respect him as a SON, speak of him as *incarnate*, or with reference to his being so. The very first promise holds him forth as the *seed* of the woman, Gen. iii. 15. which is explained, Gal. iv. 4. To Abraham he is promised as *his seed*, Gen. xxii. 18, which is explained and applied, Gal. iii. Heb. ii. 14—18. Jacob prophesies of him as the Shiloh, who should come of the tribe of Judah, and have the dominion, Gen. xlix. 10.; and so the apostle tells us that our Lord *sprung* of the tribe of Judah, Heb. vii. 14. which respects his incarnation. To David he is promised as his *seed* and royal heir, 2 Sam. vii. 12—17. Psal. lxxxix. 3, 4, 26—38. Psal. cxxxii. 11. which is explained and applied, Luke i. 32, 69. Acts ii. 30. chap. xiii. 23. This promise or oath made to David is much insisted on by the prophets, who always speak of him as connected with humanity. In Isaiah vii. 14. he is promised as Immanuel (God with us,) and the same verse shews that this name belongs to him as a *Son conceived* and *born* of a Virgin; see also Mat. i. 23. We are told, Isa. ix. 6, 7. that his name shall be called the Mighty God; but we are also informed, that this was to be one of the titles of the *child born* and *Son given*, and we see this promise applied to him as such, Luke i. 31, 32, 33. chap. ii. 11. In Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. it is promised that he should be called Jehovah our Righteousness; but this title is given to him as a *Righteous Branch* raised unto David. In Micah v. 6. it is declared that his goings forth have been of old, from the days of eternity; but this is affirmed of him who should be born at Bethlehem Ephratah, as explained, Mat. ii. 6.

The highest *titles* and *names* given him in the Old Testament, such as JEHOVAH, GOD, LORD, &c. are

applied to him as connected with human nature. Thus Psal. xlv. 6, 7. "Thy throne, *O God*, is for ever and ever," &c. respects him as raised from the dead, exalted at the Father's right hand, and anointed with the oil of joy above his fellows, Heb. i. 8.—In Psal. xcvii. 5, 7. he is called *Jehovah*, the *Lord* of the whole earth, and all the gods are commanded to worship him; but this is applied to him as God's *first begotten* brought again into the world, Heb. i. 6.—In Psal. cx. 1. David in Spirit calls him his *Lord;* but this refers to his resurrection and exaltation at the Father's right hand, Acts ii. 34, 35.—In Isa. xl. throughout, the grandest and most lofty descriptions are given of him as *Jehovah*, the *God* of Israel; but then we are at the same time directed to behold this person as pointed out by John the Baptist, "crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of *Jehovah*, make straight in the desert an highway for our *God*," ver. 3. with Mat. iii. 3. for John's mission was to make manifest to Israel this God incarnate, John i. 31. In Zech. xiii. 7. he is called *Jehovah's fellow;* but withal, the *man*, the shepherd that was to be *smitten*, which applies to him only in flesh, as explained, Mat. xxvi. 31. In short, Peter tells us, that the main scope of the prophecies was to testify beforehand the *sufferings* of Christ, and the *glory* that should follow, 1 Pet. i. 11. The former he endured in this world, while tabernacling amongst us; the latter he obtained in consequence of his resurrection. What has been observed of the prophecies might likewise be shewn of the types which prefigured him, all of which referred to him as made flesh; but I wish to avoid prolixity. These hints, however, may serve to shew, that whilst the Old Testa-

ment revelation declares him to be the Most High God, it at the same time directs the faith of the ancient saints forward to his appearing in flesh, and it does not appear that it ever represents him *as a Son* in any other view. It was in this view that they saw his day afar off and rejoiced, and, dying in the faith of him as yet to come, confessed him to be all their desire and all their salvation.

Several texts, however, are adduced from the Old Testament to prove him a *begotten Son* from eternity. I shall just take notice of those upon which the chief stress is laid.

Psal. ii. 7. "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." But the apostles explain this Psalm as a prophecy of Christ's sufferings, Acts iv. 25—29. his resurrection, chap. xiii. 33. and his following glory and dominion, Heb. i. 4, 5. chap. v. 5. so that the only question that remains is this, Whether the apostles or the modern interpreters are most to be credited? It is absurd to explain the expression *this day* to signify *from eternity;* a sense which it never bears in any writings either sacred or profane.

Prov. viii. 22—32. is also brought to prove Christ's eternal generation as a Son, and that he was not only fore-ordained to, but actually invested with the office of Mediator in eternity, and, as such, made the worlds. But it does not appear that by Wisdom here is meant the person of Christ at all. No other part of scripture applies this passage to him; nor is he ever held forth as a *female* personage, though his church, which is his spouse, is spoken of as such.—Wisdom is here plainly

personified, or spoken of as a person, and that both as it exists in God himself and as it is communicated to men. As it respects men, it is explained by synonymous words, such as *understanding, knowledge, prudence, the fear of the Lord,* &c. chap. ii. 3. and viii. 12, 14. and ix. 10. which shews that it is not a real, but figurative person. She is represented as a female calling to the sons of men to hear and obey her instructions, ver. 1—11. This she urges by many motives, but chiefly by her original dignity, as an essential perfection of Jehovah.—"The Lord *possessed me* in the beginning of his way," *i. e.* Jehovah possessed wisdom eternally as he does all his other perfections.—" I was *set up* from everlasting," *viz.* as the planner and director of his eternal counsels. "When there were no depths, I was *brought forth*" not into being, but into exercise or action, in contriving and forming the divine schemes with regard to all his future works.—" Then was I by him as one *brought up* with him;" being co-eternal and co-existent with him, and an essential property of his nature.—"And I was daily his *delight*;" for as he delighteth in the exercise of his own mercy and loving-kindness, (Jer. ix. 24. Mic. vii. 18.) so doth he rejoice in the exercise of his wisdom in contriving and conducting the execution of his gracious plans.—"*Rejoicing* always before him; *rejoicing* in the habitable part of his earth, and my *delights* were with the sons of men." Here Wisdom is said to rejoice, even as Mercy is said to rejoice, Jam. ii. 13. and her delights were in a peculiar manner with the sons of men, as in their salvation she was to be magnified; for therein the manifold wisdom of God is displayed both to angels and men, Eph. iii. 10. But though we were

to apply all these things to the person of Christ, it will by no means prove the point contended for. He is not here spoken of as a Son, and should we explain the *bringing forth*, of his being brought into being or existence, we give up the eternity of his person.

Prov. xxx. 4. is likewise pleaded as a proof of his being a Son before he came in the flesh; the words are, "Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his SON'S name, if thou canst tell?" Here it is supposed that these questions are affirmative of the wisdom and power of God, whose Son is here mentioned; but this is a mistake. These questions relate to men, and imply a strong denial that any man can do these things. In the foregoing verses Agur confesses his own ignorance, and in this verse he declares that neither he nor any man else can either perform or explain the works of God; "What is his name, or what is his son's name?" *i. e.* What is the man's name who hath done or can do these things? or what is the name of his son? Negative interrogatories of this kind are frequent in Scripture. I shall quote a passage perfectly similar, Isa. xl. 12, 13, 14. "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? of whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and

shewed to him the way of understanding? These questions deny in the strongest terms that any creature ever did or can do such things. If any should affirm the contrary, let him tell the person's name or his son's name, if he can. But God and his Son can do all these things, therefore no such questions can be put with respect to them.

Ezek. xxi. 10. "The sword is sharpened to make a sore slaughter, it is furbished that it may glitter: should we then make mirth? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree." Some bring this as a proof that Christ was a *Son* before his incarnation. But by his *son* is meant his people, see Exod. iv. 22, 24. Jer. xxxi. 20. Hos. xi. 1. A *rod* sometimes signifies power, strength and government, Psal. xxiii. 4. and cx. 2. Jer. xlviii. 17. and at other times the instrument of punishment, 2 Sam. vii. 14. Job ix. 34. If we keep by the text, "It contemneth the rod of my son," it means that the sword of the enemy would overcome all his people's power of resistance. But if we adopt the marginal rendering, "It is the rod of my son," then it signifies, that the sword should be the instrument to chastise his son or people; for it is plainly a prophecy of the slaughter of the Jews by the sword of the Chaldeans.

Dan. iii. 25. "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." This is also adduced as an instance of his being a Son abstract from humanity. But it would be strange if we were to rest our faith on the testimony of a heathen king, who was then compelling men to idolatry, and who a little while after was driven from among men for his

pride and contempt of the true God. To suppose that he knew the Son of God—that he knew him to be such, *abstract from humanity*, and yet called him a *man* whose form was *like* the Son of God, (or *a Son of God*, as it may be rendered)—and further, that he should afterwards call this same man, in form like the Son, an *angel* sent by God, as if he knew that the Son who is equal with God, was also his servant or messenger: These suppositions are so unnatural and unsupported by the whole history, that they are altogether inadmissible. It is far more probable, that by the fourth *man* in form *like* the Son of God, he meant an angel, as he expresses it, ver. 28. and that if he intended a divine person, it was only according to the heathen mythology where he might find plenty of begotten gods, which were considered as subordinate divinities, and as coming down in the likeness of men, as the Lycaonians thought Paul and Barnabas were, Acts xiv. 11. For it is evident from the passage, that Nebuchadnezzer when he spoke these words, was not converted from idolatry, though he was forced to acknowledge the superior power of the God of Israel. But let us, for argument's sake, suppose that he knew the doctrine of the Divine Three; then he must also have known, that the fourth man who appeared in form like the Son of God, was not then a real man, but simply a divine subsistent, and, as such, equally invisible as the other persons in Godhead, and that therefore this visible form of a man, was assumed as a prelude of his future incarnation. If we can suppose him to have known this (which can scarcely be believed) then we may easily account for his saying, that the form of the fourth was *like* the Son of God, it being like him

in his incarnate and glorified state. Commentators conjecture that the divine Word often appeared of old in the form of a glorious man, as a prelude of his really assuming man's nature; if this be true, the name *Son*, which belongs to him as incarnate, might in that view be applied to him. Upon the whole, it is clear, that Christ is never spoken of as a Son in the Old Testament, but in reference to his incarnate state.

2. In the New Testament he is held forth as actually come in the flesh, and is never mentioned as a Son but in reference to this. In John i. 1, 2, 3. he is declared to be the Word which in the beginning was *with* God (*viz.* the Father) as a distinct person from him, and who was *God* of the same nature or essence with him; and we see the creation of all things is ascribed to him; but it is only when this eternal *Word was made flesh*, that he is called the *only begotten* of the Father, ver. 14.—I have already shewn from Luke i. 35. that his incarnation and birth, whereby he was made flesh, is expressly given as a *reason* for his being called the Son of God, and that not only in one of his natures, but in his whole person now constituted of both. All the subsequent gospel testimonies borne of him as the Son of God, respect his complex person.

John the Baptist saw and bare record, that "This is the *Son of God*," John i. 34. but this he affirms of him whom he baptized, on whom he saw the Spirit descend, ver, 33. and whom he points out as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, ver. 29.

The Father declares once and again, "This is *my beloved Son* in whom I am well pleased," Mat. iii. 17. chap. xvii. 5. but this declaration was made of that

person who was baptized in Jordan, and afterwards transfigured on mount Tabor.

Jesus himself testifies that he is the Son of God, John x. 36. but who is it that testifies this? Even he who really was, and appeared to the Jews a *man*, but who at the same time could say, "I and my father are one," ver. 30. This is he, who having been sanctified and sent into the world, declares himself to be the Son of God. In this Gospel of John we have many of our Lord's discourses to the Jews, wherein he affirms many things respecting himself as the Son of God, and which, if restricted to one of his natures, separately considered, would be quite inexplicable. He tells them that the Son worketh the works of the Father, chap. v. 17. that he raiseth the dead, ver. 21, 25. and is the Judge of the world, ver. 22, 27.—that the same divine honour belongs to him, that is given to the Father, ver. 23. and, in one word, that he and the Father are one, chap. x. 30. Had he been less than the true God, their charge of blasphemy would have been just; for surely by such expressions he called himself God's Son, in such a sense as to make himself equal with God. chap. v. 18. or, being a *man*, he made himself (also) *God*, chap. x. 33. —Yet, on the other hand, he tells them, that the Son can do nothing of himself, chap. 19, 30.—that the Father sheweth him all things, ver. 20.—that the doctrine was not his, but the Father's that sent him, chap. vii. 16.—that he told them the truth which he heard of God, and which the Father had taught him, chap. viii. 28, 40.—that he knew not the day and hour of the judgment, Mark xiii. 32.—that he lives by the Father, even as his people live by him, John vi. 57. and, in

short, that the Father is greater than he, chap. xiv. 28. Now, we can no more apply such things to him abstract from humanity, than we can apply hungering, weariness, dying, and rising to him in that light; yet these things, as well as the former, are predicated or affirmed of him as the *Son*, and can only be reconciled by considering him, as such, to be *man* as well as *God*. It will not solve the difficulty to say, he is inferior to the Father in respect of office as mediator; for though that be a truth, yet the question is, Who is the mediator, or the *person* that sustains that office? Is he not God's Son, Heb. vii. 28. the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. We cannot think that his office deprives him of any knowledge his Father hath—that he lives *officially* by the Father or that men live *so* by him; but we can easily conceive that the Son, as man, was not omniscient; that his knowledge, in this respect, was communicated, as well as his life, from the Father, and that in this sense as well as in respect of his office, his Father was greater than he.

His resurrection from the dead declared him to be the Son of God, Rom. i. 4. but he did not rise from the dead as a person abstract from humanity; and if we abstract his sonship from that which died and rose again, then the resurrection would be no proof of his being the Son of God, as, in that case, it would not be the Son that rose; but the apostle expressly tells us, that the person who rose was God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, ver. 3. Of this person who rose the Father says, "Thou art MY SON, this day have I begotten thee," Psal. ii. 7. with Acts xiii. 33. and this begotten Son from the dead is God's *holy child Jesus*, whom God hath

anointed; according to the apostolic explication of the 2d Psalm, Acts iv. 25—29.

The apostles proclaimed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Acts ix. 20. and is not this plainly to affirm, that *Jesus* the Son of Mary, and *Christ* the anointed prophet, priest and king, is he?—The same observation may be made on the confessions of faith which we meet with in Scripture. Peter, in answer to the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" says "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," Mat. xvi. 16. He could not mean by this that he was a Son only as God; for he gives this appellation to that person who here calls himself the *Son of man*, ver. 13. and of whom some said, that he was John the Baptist, some Elias, others Jeremias or one of the prophets, ver. 14. even that person who put the question, and to whom he is speaking, and therefore he must have included his humanity in that designation.—Jesus asks the man whom he had cured of blindness, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered and said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" This surely was a proper question, and the answer must be every way suitable, for it is given by the Lord himself to direct the man's faith to its proper object. "And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both *seen him*, and it is he that *talketh with thee*," John ix. 35, 36, 37. but the person he *saw*, and that *talked* with him, was the Word made flesh, and so must have been the Son of God in that respect, otherwise the man's question about the Son of God was not properly answered, and he must have been misled as to the object of his faith and worship; for he said, "Lord, I believe and he worshipped him," ver. 38. The eunuch's confession

runs thus, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," Acts viii. 37. By the Son of God he could not mean his divine person, abstractly considered; for this confession is made of *Jesus* of Nazareth, *the Christ*, or anointed prophet, priest and king, even of that person whom Philip preached to him from Isa. liii. as led like a sheep to the slaughter, &c. ver. 32, 33. Thus I might go over the whole New Testament.

3. The same things that are said of him as the *Son of God* are also affirmed of him as *Jesus Christ*. It is plain that the name *Jesus* belongs to him only as made flesh, for it was given to him in consequence of his being born of the Virgin, Mat. i. 21, 25.—The *Christ*, as I have already hinted, signifies his being *anointed* to, and invested with his mediatory offices of prophet, priest and king, and so must respect him as incarnate; for, as *prophet*, God raised him up of the Jewish *brethren*, like unto Moses, Acts iii. 22.—As *priest* "it behoved him in all things to be *made like unto his brethren*," Heb. ii. 17. and he was made priest "by the word of the oath which was *since the law*," chap. vii. 28. which oath "disannulled the commandment *going before*" concerning the Aaronical priesthood, ver. 17, 18.—As *king*, he must, according to God's oath, be raised up of the fruit of David's loins to sit on his throne, Psal. cxxxii. 11. Acts ii. 30. Luke i. 32. So that it is demonstrably evident, that the name *Jesus Christ* applies to him *properly* only as he is God-man. Now nothing can be shewn to prove him a *Son* before he came in the flesh, but what, by the same rule of reasoning, will also prove him to have been *Jesus Christ* before that period, which yet, as I have just noticed, cannot be so understood.—Is

*creation* ascribed to the *Son*, Col. i. 13, 16. Heb. i. 2.? It is also ascribed to *Jesus Christ*;—"who created all things by Jesus Christ," Eph. iii. 9. yet he is Jesus Christ only as made flesh.—Is the *Son* said to be *sent*, John iii. 17. Acts iii. 26. Gal. iv. 4. 1 John iv. 9, 10, 14? *Jesus Christ* is also said to be *sent*;—"and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," John xvii. 3. Is the *Son* said to *come into the world*, John xvi. 28. 1 John v. 20.? The same is affirmed of *Jesus Christ*; "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15. and this expression of *coming into the world*, is applied even unto men, John i. 9. Mat. xvii. 11, 12.—Does he say, he *came down from heaven*, John vi. 38.? He says the same of himself as the *Son of man*. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven," chap. iii. 13.—Is it said of the *Son* that he was *manifested* 1 John iii. 8. even as he is called God *manifest* in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16.? The same is affirmed of him as the *Christ*; "ye are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ—who was *manifest* in these last times for you," 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. the same thing is affirmed of him, Heb. ix. 26. and so will no more prove him a *Son* in his previous *non-manifested state*, as some speak, than it will prove him then to have been the *Christ*.—Had the *Son* a glory with the Father before the world was, John xvii. 5.? In like manner it is said of *Jesus Christ*, that "he was rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9.—that "being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Philip. ii. 5, 6.—I might multiply instances of this kind, but this specimen may serve to shew, that such expressions will no more infer that he was a *Son* before he came in the flesh, than

they will infer that he was *Jesus Christ* or the *Son of man* before that time. They in general imply the pre-existence of his *divine person;* but do not prove that he pre-existed as a *Son.* All such arguments are therefore fallacious and inconclusive. They are founded upon a misconstruction of a very common way of speaking, whereby we use the name, office or relation which a person at *present* sustains, to denominate him in every period, as well *before* as after he obtained it. Christ is eternal, but not as the Christ; the Son of man is eternal, but not as the Son of man; Emmanuel is eternal; but not as Emmanuel; even so the Son of God is eternal in his divine person, but it does not follow that he is so as a Son.

4. It is only as incarnate that he is held forth in the Scriptures, as the foundation of all our faith, hope, and everlasting salvation. It is as made flesh that he became our Emmanuel, our brother, ransomer and kinsman Redeemer. It is as such that he is our prophet, priest and king. It is as such that he lived for us, died for us, rose for us, and was glorified for us; and it is with the belief of him *in this view,* that salvation is connected. It is this view of him that gives relief to the guilty conscience and presents him, both in his person and offices, as a suitable and every way qualified Saviour, answerable to the miserable condition of guilty sinners. The declaration that he is *the Son of God,* is the very sum of the gospel or glad tidings; but how could this be glad tidings to guilty men, if it imported only his being a divine person abstract from humanity? This name might, in that case, convey to us the idea of the holy, just and mighty God, but not of the Saviour; we could not dis-

cover a peculiar suitableness in the constitution of his person to be our representative, more than in that of the Father or Holy Ghost, nor could we see any other relation we have to him, but what we have to an absolute God. I appeal to the experience of all those who have been relieved by the gospel, whether their relief came from an abstract view of Christ's eternal Sonship, or from a discovery of him as God manifest in the flesh, dying for their sins, and rising again for their justification. Will they not all with one voice declare,

Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.

But when Emmanuel's face appears,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fears,
His grace removes my sins.

Whilst Jews on their own law rely,
And Greeks of wisdom boast,
I love th' Incarnate Mystery,
And there I fix my trust.

III. I come now, in the last place, to answer some of the principal *objections* to the foregoing view of Christ's Sonship.

*Obj.* 1. If the names Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not expressive of a *relation* essential to the eternal subsistence of these divine persons, how can they reveal a Trinity of persons, or three eternal divine subsistents in the one Godhead?

*Ans.* These names reveal three distinct and eternal persons in the Godhead, because they are *personal* names, and cannot properly be applied but to persons. The *relations* they express are not indeed essential to personality; for a person may exist without being either a *father* or a *son*;* but personality is essential to these relations, for none can be a father or son without being a person. Now, when to this personality we add, that every divine title, perfection and work is ascribed to each of them severally, we have a full and clear revelation that they are three eternal divine persons. To illustrate this; the name *Creator* is relative to creation, and not expressive of any thing essential to the being of God; for God existed from eternity independent of all his works; yet this title as effectually reveals the true God as any of his essential attributes, because creation, though not *essential*, is yet *peculiar* to God; for none can create, but he who is possessed of eternal power and Godhead, Rom. i. 20.

*Obj.* 2. If the Son did not derive his original existence from the Father by generation, nor the Holy Spirit by procession, then they must be three co-ordinate persons, equally self-existent, unoriginated and independent, and so must be three Gods.

*Ans.* This objection supposes that the unity of the Divine Three as one God depends upon an original difference and inequality in the manner and order of their subsistence; and that, unless one of them be self-

* This is evident, for the Holy Ghost is neither a *father* nor a *son*. Angels are also persons, though they are neither *fathers* nor *sons* in relation to each other.

existent and unoriginated, and the other two derived and dependent, they must be three Gods. Yet one would think that the very opposite supposition would be more reasonable, and that no essential difference or inequality can belong to the unity of the Divine Three. It is from this supposed original inequality that the Arians argue against the Divine Three being "one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory," and maintain, that one person alone is the true and eternal God, and that the other two, being originally derived, are only subordinate and inferior Gods. If any thing which implies an original inequality among the Divine Three be once admitted, I freely own that I cannot see how the Arians can be satisfyingly refuted. For my own part, I know not wherein the unity of the Divine Three as one God consists, if it be not in their equally possessing one Godhead with all its essential perfections, among which absolute eternity and necessary existence must be included. To this it has been objected, That three human persons, though they partake of one nature with all its properties, can in no respect be termed one human being. True; but this only shews that the Divine Being exists in a way peculiar to himself, and that the union of the Divine Three in the Godhead is infinitely more intimate and close than that which subsists among created persons whether angelic or human.

*Obj.* 3. When two of the divine Persons are denominated in Scripture by their relative titles of *Father* and *Son*, in reference to any thing before the commencement of time, it is a proof that they existed in the relation of Father and Son not only before the incarnation, but from eternity.

*Ans.* This objection at first sight appears plausible, but will not bear examination. I have already both anticipated and answered it, (see p. 449—450). It cannot be shewn that the scripture affirms any thing of Christ before the commencement of time under his filial title of *Son*, which it does not also affirm of him under his official title *the Christ;* and therefore, if such things prove him to be an eternal *Son*, they will equally prove him to have been the *Christ* or *Messiah* from all eternity. It is said of the *Son*, that he is before all things—that he had glory with the Father before the world was—that all things were made by him—that he came down from heaven—that he was sent into the world, &c. Col. i. 17. John xvii. 5. Col. i. 6. Heb. i. 2. John vi. 38. chap. iii. 17. But all these things are also affirmed of him under his title *the Christ* or *the Son of man*, such as, that he is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever—that he existed in the form of God—that all things were created by him—that the Son of man come down from heaven—that he was sent, and came into the world, &c. Heb. xiii. 8. Philp. ii. 5, 6. Eph. iii. 9. John. iii. 13. ch. xvii. 3. 1 Tim. i. 15. But as none of these things prove that he was actually *the Christ* or *the Son of man* before the world, or even before his incarnation, much less from all eternity; so neither can they prove that he was actually the Son of God before he came in the flesh. They indeed prove the eternal pre-existence of his *divine person;* but not that he eternally existed as a *Son*.

Nothing is more common than to denominate a person by his *present* title, office or relation, when speaking of him in reference to a period *previous* to his possessing it. So God is said to have "created all things by *Jesus*

*Christ;*" here his divine person, as the Creator of all things, is denominated by his official title the *Christ*, though that belonged to him only as come in the flesh. The same observation will apply to his filial title of *Son*. The reason for this is plain and obvious; he was actually the Son and the Christ when these things were spoken or written of him; he was best known or distinguished under the New Testament by these titles, and therefore it was most natural and proper that he should be denominated by them, even when speaking of him in his pre-existent state. Hereby also circumlocutions, and the frequent change of terms are avoided, which might confuse our minds as to the identity of his divine person which is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

*Obj.* 4. If Christ were called the Son of God on account of his incarnation, then he would be the Son of the Holy Ghost to whose agency his incarnation is chiefly ascribed, and therefore in this sense he could not be *the only begotten of the Father*.

*Ans.* That Christ is called the Son of God on account of his incarnation admits of no doubt; for the angel expressly informs the Virgin, that the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her; and this he assigns not only as the *cause* of her conceiving without knowing a man, but also as a *reason* why the holy thing to be born of her should be called the Son of God, Luke i. 35.

I have already shewn, that there was a joint agency of the Divine Three in the incarnation of Christ. (p. 434.) The Scriptures never represent the Father as acting separate from or without his Spirit, nor the Spirit as acting separate from or without the Father. So that

though it is said that the Holy Ghost came upon the Virgin, and that she was found with child of the Holy Ghost, Luke i. 35. Mat. i. 18, 20. yet this does not exclude the agency of the Father; for this wonderful generation was effected by *the power of the* HIGHEST, ver. 35. and so Christ was to be called *the Son of the* HIGHEST, ver. 32. that is, of the Father, and not the Son of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly, Christ addressing his Father says, "A body hast thou prepared me," Heb. x. 5. which shews the Father's agency in his generation. Again, his resurrection from the dead is another sense in which he is said to be begotten, Rev. i. 5. Col. i. 18. and though he is said to be "quickened by the Spirit," 1 Pet. iii. 18. and to concur in this himself, by taking his life again, and raising up the temple of his body in three days, John x. 17, 18. chap. ii. 19. yet this begetting is ascribed to the Father, Rom. vi. 4. Gal. i. 1. Eph. i. 19, 20. and in reference to it the Father said unto him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I BEGOTTEN thee," Acts xiii. 33. So that Christ, both in respect of his incarnation and resurrection, is the Son of the Highest, the only begotten of the Father.

*Obj.* 5. The words of the angel to the Virgin, ver. 35. are not intended to give a *reason* why Christ was to be called the Son of God, but to relieve her mind from a difficulty which she had started in the preceding verse: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" The angel's words therefore are *no more* than an answer to this question.

*Ans.* It is evident that the angel's words contain *more* than a solution of that difficulty; for the words, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the

Highest shall overshadow thee," are a complete answer to that question, and the additional words are no answer to it at all; for it could not solve the Virgin's difficulty as to her conceiving without knowing a man, to tell her, that the holy thing to be born of her should be called the Son of God. But if we look back to ver. 31, 32, 33. we shall find, that he had told her not only that she should "conceive in her womb and bring forth a Son," but also that "he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest,—and shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;" and therefore he not only assigns *the power of the Highest* as the *cause* of her conceiving without knowing a man, but also assigns it as a *reason* why the holy child, thus conceived, should be called *the Son of God*, or *the Son of the Highest*, as he had just before told her, ver. 32.

*Obj*. 6. The words (διο και) *therefore also*, do not refer to *the power of the Highest* in his incarnation as the *cause* or *reason* of his *being* the Son of God, but only of his being *called* the Son of God, that is, of his being owned and acknowledged as such by his people.

*Ans*. But why should his people *call* or *acknowledge* him the Son of God in *consequence* or *on account* of his incarnation, if there was not the least connection between his incarnation and sonship? If his sonship had no foundation in his incarnation, why should he *therefore*, or for that reason, be called the Son of God? To be *called* the Son of God is to be *really* his Son; for he is so *called*, not only by his people, but by the Father himself, and that because he hath begotten him, Heb. i. 5.

*Obj*. 7. If Christ be a Son only as connected with

humanity, wherein consists the distinction between his being a SON and a SERVANT, as stated by the apostle, Heb. iii. 5. "Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a *servant*—But Christ as a *Son* over his own house," &c. Was not his assumption of humanity a taking upon him the form of a servant, Philip. ii. 7.?

*Ans.* If this objection means any thing at all, it must be this, that Christ is not a Son over his own house as Emmanuel, but only as God abstract from his manhood; but the contrary is evident from the passage cited. Indeed, in regard of his state in this world, he became poor, took upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death of the cross; and thus, though he were a Son (or God manifest in the flesh, and heir of all things), yet learned he *obedience* by the things which he suffered, Heb. v. 8.—But the design of the apostle in chap. iii. is not to set forth Christ in his humble state of a *servant*, but in his glorified and exalted state of a *Son;* for though he was a Son in both states, yet in his humiliation he did not appear in that form of filial dignity and dominion which belonged to him; he differed nothing in state and appearance from a servant, though he was Lord of all. But having finished his work of obedience unto death, and being raised from the dead, and exalted to the Father's right hand, then he appears in the proper majesty, glory, and authority of God's Son, his first-born, having the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power, as supreme Lord and heir of all things. It is in this view the apostle contrasts him with Moses in three particulars 1st. Moses was but a part of God's house or building; but Christ is the *builder* of the house, ver. 3.—2d,

Moses was merely a *man;* but Christ who built all things is *God,* ver. 4.—3d. Moses was faithful only as a *servant* in God's typical house; but Christ as a *Son* over his own house, ver. 5, 6. It is evident that the contrast of *servant* and *Son* here is not simply a contrast of *nature,* such as of the human and divine, for that is the second difference, but it is a contrast of *dignity* and *station* in the house or church of God. Moses had his station as a SERVANT *in* the house of God; but Christ as a SON *over* it, he having the supreme dominion over God's house as Lord and heir of all. In the same sense *servant* and *son* are contrasted, Gal. iv. 1. Now Christ as he is raised from the dead, and made head over all things to his church, is a Son over it as God-man. These observations also explain, how the one person of the Son was "made for a little while *lower* than the angels (διὰ) by the suffering of death," Heb. ii. 9. and how the same person "was made so much *better* than they," being exalted above them, and they commanded to worship him, Heb. i. 4—10. In all such seeming difficulties, we must call to mind his two different states, and also the two different natures which constitute his one person.

*Obj.* 8. Does not this scheme confound his sonship with his office, and make him the Son only as he is the Christ? With what propriety then can it be affirmed of Jesus the Christ that he is the Son of God? Is not this like saying, that Christ is the Christ or that the Son of God is the Son of God?

*Ans.* Though the names *Christ* and *Son of God* point out one and the same *person,* and are therefore sometimes used indifferently, yet they do not in all respects mean

the same thing in that person. *The Christ* imports his being the *anointed* king and priest; but *Son of God* farther imports the *divine dignity* of his person as the Word made flesh, his *filial relation* to the Father as his only begotten, and his *right* to the inheritance, kingdom and priesthood as God's first-born and heir. There is therefore no impropriety of speech in the gospel declaration, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

*Obj.* 9. If he is the Son of God only as incarnate, wherein lies the distinction between this and his being the Son of man?

*Ans.* The name *Son of God* imports that he is *truly* God, and *Son of man* that he is *really* man; but as *Son of man* does not mean that he is *only* a man, so neither does *Son of God* imply that he is *only* God. Under the appellation *Son of man*, he speaks of himself as having come down from heaven, and in heaven while on earth, John iii. 13.—as having power to forgive sins, Mat. ix. 6.— to raise the dead and judge the world, Mat. xxv. 31, 32. John v. 27. therefore this name must include more than his human nature. Again, speaking of himself under the appellation *Son of God*, he declares he can do nothing of himself, John v. 19. and that the Father is greater than he, chap. xiv. 28. therefore the name *Son of God*, must include more than his divine nature. The truth is, these names are used indifferently to denominate the *one person* of Emmanuel, and not to give us a separate or abstract view of his natures and their peculiar actings, this being easily known from the nature of the actions themselves. In his person we find God performing the actions of a man, and a man performing the actions, and exercising and displaying the

perfections of God; for though he is possessed of two distinct natures, yet such is their union in him, that they make but one *Self;* so that if we abstract or separate them, we lose the person of the Son; it is no more himself.

*Obj.* 10. But does not this blend and confound the divine and human natures, which ought always to be distinguished?

*Ans.* By no means: The divine nature is not made human, nor the human nature divine, nor is there a mixt nature compounded of both; but in the one person of the Son of God they are so united, as that it can with propriety be said, that the *child born* is the *Mighty God,* that the *man* is *God's fellow,* that the *Son of man* came down from heaven; and, on the other hand, that *God* purchased the church with his *own blood,* that *God laid down his life* for us. Many think such expressions are very liable to be misunderstood, and out of their zeal for the honour of his divine person, carefully abstract it from every thing human, by which they are led to deny, that the child born, who shed his blood and laid down his life, was the mighty God: Why? Because God could not be born, could not lay down his life, nor had he any blood to shed; and therefore such things can *only* be affirmed of him merely *as man.* Thus they divide him into two distinct agents, and present us with a *mere man,* or rather *human nature,* as redeeming the church. For the same reason, when they consider him as the object of religious worship, they abstract his manhood, in order to avoid idolatry, though the angels and redeemed company worship him as the Lamb that was slain. The Scriptures, however, do not thus divide Christ:

they never use such dintinctions as to tell us, that this he did *only as God* and that he did *only as man;* but present us with one and the same person making the worlds, born of a virgin, by *himself* purging our sins with his *own* blood, raised from the dead, and exalted to the highest dominion and glory, as the object of the worship and adoration of men and angels. So that by whatever name he is denominated, or whatever work is ascribed to him, it is *himself,* his own *one individual person* that is held forth in all.

*Obj.* 11. The Father's giving his only begotten Son is always held forth in Scripture as the highest expression or effect of his love to men, and that on account of the *relation* in which he stands to him, and the infinite paternal love he bears him, as being his own proper Son: but if he is not his natural, essential and eternal Son in Godhead, the relation cannot be so near and endearing, nor the expression of love so great in giving him.

*Ans.* This is a very bold assertion. It implies that the relation and union of the eternal Three in the one Godhead is not so near and endearing as that of father and son. Further, the objection implies, that the Word as made flesh is not of such dignity, nor so near and dear to the Father as if he had been begotten by him in his divine person from eternity; else why may not the gift of him be as great an expression of love in the former as in the latter case? But that we may not follow our own imaginations, let us attend to the passages which set forth the greatness of God's love by the gift of his Son, and see whether the Son given was such abstract from humanity, or as the Word made flesh. The first I shall mention is John iii. 16. " God so loved the

world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Was not the person who spoke these words the Son given? Was he not the Word made flesh, the only begotten of the Father, John i. 14.? Was he not given when he was born to us in the city of David as our Saviour Jesus Christ the Lord, Luke ii. 11. and was he not also given and delivered for us when he was lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, as he shews in this very passage, John iii. 14, 15.? and is not the everlasting life here mentioned connected with our believing on him as come in the flesh, delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification? 1John iv. 2. Rom. iv. 24, 25. Another passage is Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." Here the argument supposes that the person delivered up is of more worth than *us all*, and than *all things* given along with him, and therefore must be a divine person of infinite dignity. But this person called God's *own Son*, whom he *spared not* but *delivered up*, is no other than his "holy child Jesus, against whom Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever God's hand and counsel had determined before to be done," Acts iv. 27, 28. If he were *only a man* where would be the argument in the text? how would it follow that with him also God must necessarily give us all things? If he were *only God*, how in this sense did his Father *not spare*, but *deliver him up?* or how could men *crucify* him as such? 1 Cor. ii. 8. Both his natures, then, must be included in the name God's *own Son*. A third text

is, Rom. v. 8. " God commendeth his love towards us, in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Here the Son of God is denominated by his official character the *Christ*, wherein he partook of our nature, as I have shewn; yet, *as the Christ*, his death (and *as such* only he could die) is set forth as the highest instance of God's love, and that whereby he commends it towards us. I shall just mention another passage, *viz.* 1 John iii. 16. " Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." Here he is declared to be *God;* but before we can perceive this expression of his love in laying down his life, we must view him also as *man*, and that too in *one person;* for it was *God's own life* that was laid down for us; it was *God's own blood* by which he purchased his church; it was by *himself* he purged our sins.

*Edinburgh*, 1777.

AN ESSAY

ON

# THE EVIDENCE

OF

CHRIST's RESURRECTION.

ON THE

# EVIDENCE

OF

## CHRIST's RESURRECTION.

THERE is not a more important fact recorded in the Gospel history than the RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead. The apostle Paul admits that the truth of the whole gospel system stands or falls with it: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain: yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.—And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." 1 Cor. xv. 14—19. Justifying faith is described not only as a belief that Christ was delivered for our offences, but that he was raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25.—a believing in the heart that God hath raised him from the dead, chap. x. 9. The Christian hope of the heavenly inheritance rests also upon this foundation; for God, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively

hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. i. 3. Seeing then that so much depends upon the truth of this article of the Christian faith, it can never be unseasonable to consider the evidence on which it is established.

I. The resurrection of the Messiah was the *subject of Old Testament prophecies.* David, speaking in the person of the Messiah, says, "Thou wilt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Psal. xvi. 10, 11. See how the apostles Peter and Paul explain and apply this prophecy, Acts ii. 25—32. chap. xiii. 35—38. In ver. 33, 34, Paul adduces two other prophecies of the resurrection of Christ. One is from Psal. ii. 7. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." The other is from Isa. lv. 3. "I will give you the sure mercies of David." Which imports that he would perform the promise made unto David in raising up his seed, the Messiah, to sit on his throne, Acts ii. 30. But not to insist upon particular passages, we may observe in general, that the prophets, by testifying beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, 1 Pet. i. 11. prophesied of his resurrection; for as his sufferings included his death, so his following glory necessarily presupposes his rising from the dead. Accordingly, when Jesus had explained these prophecies to his disciples after his resurrection, he concludes with these words, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day," &c. Luke xxiv. 46. These prophecies prove, that the promised Messiah was to rise from the dead without seeing corruption: It was therefore an

event to be expected; and when the apostles with great power of miracles gave witness of the resurrection of Jesus as a past event, it must have added great weight to their testimony, when they shewed that it was the exact fulfilment of what had been long before predicted by the prophets. See Acts xxvi. 22, 23.

II. Jesus himself *foretold* that he was to rise again from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion, and that not only to his disciples, as in Mat. xvi. 21. and xvii. 23. and xx. 19. but also to his enemies, and rested the proof of his divine mission on that event. See Mat. xii. 38, 39, 40. John ii. 18, 19, 21. and x. 17, 18. and viii. 28. The chief priests and Pharisees, who condemned him, fairly acknowledged his having told them, that after three days * he would rise again, Mat. xxvii. 63. What I would remark upon this is, That if Jesus had intended to impose upon mankind by a pretended resurrection as the proof of his mission, there could not be a more impolitic step than thus to forewarn his enemies of it, and to fix the very day on which it was to happen; for this could not fail to set them upon their guard, and so they could have easily detected and frustrated his scheme, which they were every way concerned to do, both to prevent the people from being deceived, and to vindicate their own conduct in crucifying him. This conduct then, can never be accounted for upon a supposition of intended deceit, but is a strong proof that he was conscious of his having a power to lay down his life and to take it again, notwithstanding all the power and

* *After three days* does not signify after three complete days are expired; but is of the same import with *on the third day*. Compare 2 Chron. x. 5. with ver. 12. and Esther iv. 16. with chap. v. 1.

circumspection of his enemies. They sought a sign from him to prove that he was the Messiah. He had shewn them many signs already which yet did not convince them; he therefore refers them to that greatest of all signs, his resurrection from the dead, Mat. xii. 40. and tells them it would happen on the third day after his death: and, lastly, he delivers himself up into their hands to be crucified and slain at their instigation, and under their inspection. Can any thing bear stronger marks of sincerity and truth? Or how could his most inveterate and suspicious enemies desire a fairer opportunity to satisfy themselves both of the truth of his death and resurrection?

III. The *conduct of Christ's enemies* affords many strong corroborating proofs of the truth of his resurrection. Being forewarned of his rising from the dead on the third day (as has been shewn,) and foreseeing that such a report, whether true or false, would be followed with very disagreeable consequences to them, if once it gained credit among the people, Acts v. 28. and having also observed such extraordinary works done by Jesus in his lifetime, as might induce men the more easily to believe his resurrection, John ii. 47, 58. they took the most effectual measures that human wisdom could devise, to guard against all imposition in that matter, and to manifest to all the world, if possible, that Jesus was an impostor. The first step they took was to make themselves sure that he was really dead; and, that they might not be deceived by appearances, his side was pierced with a spear, from whence issued forth blood and water, John xix. 33, 34. by which it appears, that his heart was

pierced, as it is probable that the water in the pericardium, which incloses it, was let out; and this of itself, though he had been alive, would have produced instant death. Hence we may see that if Jesus should afterwards appear alive, it must be a real resurrection, seeing he was really dead. Their next care was to secure the sepulchre where his body was deposited. This sepulchre was hewn out of a rock, Mark xv. 46. and could not be secretly digged through or undermined; it was a new sepulchre too, where never man before was laid, Luke xxiii. 55. so that if any arose from thence it must have been Jesus. The door of it was shut up with a large stone, and this stone they sealed, so that it could not be moved in the least without their knowledge: and, for further security, they placed a band of armed soldiers to guard against all attempts from without; or, as they themselves express it, "lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first," Mat. xxvii, 63—66. They were aware that the report of his resurrection, if credited, would have more influence with the people than all the miracles of his life; and therefore were determined to cut off every possible pretence for such a report. As the time limited by Jesus for his resurrection was but short, they had no difficulty to keep up an unintermitted watch, till it was elapsed, and by producing the dead body at the end of the third day, they would have fully proved that Jesus was a false prophet, and rendered it for ever impossible for his disciples to give the least colour of truth to his resurrection.

But though these precautions were sufficient to prevent

or detect all impositions, had there been any in the case; yet they could not restrain the energy of that divine power by which Jesus was raised from the dead. Accordingly we are told, that, on the morning of the third day, " there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightening, and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him, the keepers did shake; and became as dead men.—And some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done," Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4, 11. Now all their measures were most effectually disconcerted. The very precautions they had taken to manifest the falsehood of Christ's resurrection, gave evidence on the contrary side, and manifested beyond all contradiction, the truth and reality of it. Though the guards did not know the end or design of Christ's resurrection; yet they were all witnesses to the fact, and were very sensible that there was no human contrivance or deceit in the case.

The chief priests finding no ground to doubt the account given by the guards, immediately assembled with the elders to consult what was to be done, ver. 12. And what was the result of their deliberations? Did they candidly yield to the evidence, own Jesus to be the Messiah, and confess their dreadful guilt in rejecting, condemning, and crucifying him? Far from it; their honour, their character, their worldly interest, and perhaps the safety of their lives forbad such a step. They had embarked in a controversy against the Lord and his Anointed, and they were resolved to proceed and pro-

secute with deceit, what they had begun with violence; and therefore "they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept," ver. 12, 13. Had they not been confounded and infatuated in the highest degree, they would never have put such a story into the mouth of the guards, as carried its confutation in its own bosom; for who could seriously believe, that the fear of punishment would have suffered the guards to sleep; to sleep all, as it were, by one consent at the same time; or that the timorous disciples knew they were asleep, and had improved the critical moment at the peril of their lives?

Who could believe the testimony of witnesses, concerning what was transacted when they were confessedly asleep, and could not possibly see any thing? Had not the Sanhedrim been greatly perplexed, they never would have thus exposed themselves to a company of mercenaries, and put it in their power to divulge their shame and guilt: But as this was the only expedient, which the circumstances of the case suggested to them, they were obliged to bribe the soldiers to propagate a senseless lie, and conceal the authors of it, and at the same time, undertook to excuse them to the governor for their neglect of duty, in which they might very well hope to succeed, as he had already gratified them in the crucifixion of Jesus, though he was persuaded of his innocence, and knew that for envy they had delivered him up, chap. xxvii. 18, 24. Thus we see, that though the enemies of Jesus were forewarned of his resurrection, and took all possible methods to prevent every supposable stratagem of his disciples in that manner; yet so far

were they from being able fairly to disprove the fact, that they were obliged to betake themselves to the most palpable falsehoods and wicked artifices to suppress the evidence.

When the Apostles began to preach the resurrection of Christ to the people, we find the Jewish rulers stung to the quick. They saw that such a testimony was charging them with the highest guilt, and bringing that man's blood upon them, Acts v. 28. and so they were highly concerned to vindicate themselves, if possible, and confute the apostles by shewing the falsehood of their testimony; but this they were incapable of doing. It would appear that, upon reflection, they had even given up with the fable they had invented for their sleeping witnesses, as a thing ridiculous, and rather prejudicial than serviceable to their cause; for though it might pass pretty well as a common saying or report among the unthinking multitude, who were prejudiced against Jesus and his followers, Mat. xxviii. 15. yet it would not bear to be much insisted on, or narrowly canvassed, and would make but a sorry evidence to confront the apostles' testimony in any court of judicature; and therefore, as their last shift, they had recourse to the violent measures of imprisoning, threatening and beating the apostles in order to stop their mouths, and if possible, to suppress that truth which, as they could not confute, they were unwilling fairly to examine. The speech of Gamaliel, a member of their council, demonstrates in the clearest manner, that they had nothing to advance in opposition to the apostles' testimony, and that they even supposed it might be true, from some facts of which they were eye-witnesses, and could not, though ever so willing,

deny; for they agreed at that time to spare the lives of the apostles, from this consideration, that if that counsel or work was of God, they could not overthrow it; and lest haply they should be found, in such an attempt, even to fight against God, Acts v. 33—41.

Upon this head I may further add, That many of Christ's betrayers and murderers were overcome by the evidence of his resurrection, and deeply convinced of their guilt, repented, embraced, and confessed the faith which they once destroyed, and that at the risk of all that is held dear to men in life. Such were among the three thousand converted by Peter's sermon, Acts ii. 37—42. and such was the apostle Paul, who from a most cruel and bloody persecutor, became, from the fullest conviction, a most zealous and successful promoter of this truth.

IV. The *qualifications, character,* and *condition* of the chosen witnesses of Christ's resurrection, together with the *consequent change* that took place upon them, are strong evidences of the truth of their testimony. For,

1. They could not be deceived *themselves.* They were *numerous,* and could not all be deceived, 1 Cor. xv. 5.—They were perfectly well *acquainted* with Jesus before he suffered, and could not be imposed on by another in his stead, Acts i. 21, 22.—They had all the means of satisfaction that could possibly be given, for the space of forty days, ver. 3.—They *saw* him often, after his resurrection, and for a considerable time at once, and that too whilst they were together, Luke xxiv. 38, 39, 40.—They *heard* his instructions and conversed

with him familiarly face to face. They *felt* and *handled* him, and saw and felt the wounds of his crucifixion in his hands, feet and side, Luke xxiv. 39. John xx. 20, 27. —and lastly, they *ate* and *drank* with him at different times, Luke xxiv. 30, 41, 42, 43. John xxi. 12, 13, 14. Acts x. 41.

2. As they could not be deceived themselves, neither could they deceive *others*. This will appear, whether we consider the state of their minds, or the precaution and vigilance of the Jews. They were simple unlearned men, incapable of deep designs, or of contriving and managing any plot that depended on a nice adjustment of circumstances. They were full of the prejudices of their country, and of the notions of an earthly kingdom, and nothing was farther from their thoughts, or more opposite to their inclinations, than the death of Christ. Hence Peter rebuked him when he foretold it, Matt. xvi. 22. At another time, when speaking to them of his death and resurrection, it is said, "they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him," Mark ix. 31, 32. They did not understand what his rising from the dead meant, or what end it could answer, ver. 10. And even after his resurrection, before he manifested himself to them, it is said, that "as yet they knew not the scriptures, that he must rise again from the dead," John xx. 9. Christ's death and resurrection was no part of their plan. Nothing was farther from their thoughts than that, after being ignominiously put to death, he should rise again, and set up a kingdom not of this world; and so we find they were quite disconcerted by his death, seemed to give up all for lost, Luke xxiv. 21. and could not believe one another, ver. 11. John xx. 25. nay,

scarcely could they credit their own senses that he was risen again. Luke xxiv. 41. From all which it appears they neither did nor could contrive a scheme wherein Christ's death and resurrection was a necessary part. It was above their abilities, and contrary to all their notions of the Messiah and his kingdom.

But supposing them capable of contriving such a scheme, it was still impossible for them to carry it into execution. The body of Jesus was deposited in a sepulchre hewn out of a rock, and a band of armed soldiers was placed to guard it against all attempts, as has been shewn. What could the disciples do in such a case, were they ever so willing? The guard was to continue until the time set for Christ's resurrection was elapsed, and if in that time the disciples could not convey away his body, Jesus would appear a false prophet; and it would be equally vain to pretend he was risen after the time limited, as it would be to attempt such a testimony whilst the body was still to be found in the sepulchre. Should they break through the guards, and take him away by force, that would have ruined their scheme at once, as the soldiers would be sufficient witnesses against them; but this violent procedure was never so much as pretended either by the soldiers or the Jews. Nor indeed were the disciples in any condition, or possessed of resolution sufficient for such an attempt, had they been so inclined, they being scattered upon the apprehending of Jesus, as timorous sheep having no shepherd. It cannot be supposed they would bribe the guards to favour their designs; for this also would infallibly ruin their scheme. The union and fidelity of deceivers among themselves is at best but unstable and precarious, and can never be

lasting; and in this case it is unreasonable to suppose that the disciples would trust the whole success of their scheme to the fidelity of those, who, by such a connivance as was itself a breach of the trust reposed in them by their superiors, would discover themselves to be the worst of cheats. Had it been possible for them to effect this, it can never be imagined that such villainous confidants would still continue to stifle and conceal the matter, without being tempted by the pleasure of the thing, the service it might do to their religion, the hopes of a greater reward, or the hatred of so gross an imposture, to expose the shame and infamy of its authors. Besides, if the Jewish rulers had found the least ground to suspect a connivance of this nature they could not fail to find out the truth, by a proper examination of the guards, or by such other methods as they found most effectual to operate a discovery, in which they were so deeply interested for their own justification. And would they not rather have done this than expose their villainy to the soldiers, and bribe them to propagate a senseless lie, which could never gain credit with persons of discernment?

3. The witnesses had *no motive* or *incitement* to give a false testimony in this matter. All deceivers have some advantage or reward in their view, and which they propose to themselves as the fruit of their fraud and deceit; but what advantage could the disciples expect, by testifying the resurrection of Jesus, had they known it to be a falsehood? While Jesus was alive, they might perhaps expect some reward for their attachment to him, either in this or in a future state; but when they saw that he was dead, and did not rise again according to his promise, they would then discover him to have been

a deceiver, from whom they could receive no benefit in *this world*, because he, being dead, could not bestow it himself, and because he, being condemned and put to death as a wicked person, they could expect no favour, honour or esteem from others, on his account, as his memory was detested by the bulk of the Jewish nation. Nor could they expect any advantage from a known impostor, in the *world to come:* Could they think that a deceiver had the power of conferring eternal life beyond the grave, who was not able to make good his promise, and raise himself from the dead; or that, in this respect, he could save others, when he could not save himself? Or could they imagine that a holy and just God would reward them for imposing upon mankind an egregious falsehood? Impossible.

4. As they had nothing to hope for if Jesus was not risen, so they had every thing to fear in giving a testimony of this kind. The persons who condemned Jesus to death, were the civil and religious rulers of the nation, men of the highest station, power and credit among the people. Now to testify that Jesus was risen, and rewarded of God with the highest glory and honour, was to declare his innocence and righteousness in the strongest manner, and so to throw the greatest odium upon the most respectable characters, by representing them as the betrayers and murderers of the true Messiah, the prince of life. They must have been very short-sighted indeed, if they did not see that this would bring upon them the united vengeance of those men, as in fact it did. Had they been conscious of forcibly taking away the body, or of bribing the guards to secrecy, they must have been in continual fears that the whole would be

divulged; nor could they be certain that the matter would remain a secret even among themselves; and, in either case, they could not expect to escape with impunity. But whether it were divulged or not, they could expect nothing in this world by bearing a false testimony to Christ's resurrection, but infamy, persecution, poverty, and even death, together with the fearful foreboding of judgment in the world to come.

Let us suppose, they were deceived by false hopes at first; yet how shall we account for their persevering, when all these supposed hopes were frustrated? Certainly their sufferings and distresses must at length have opened their eyes, and convinced them of the vanity of all the expectations that deceivers could be supposed to have, and then they must either have given up the cause, or have persisted in it, not only destitute of, but contrary to, all the motives or principles that can be supposed to influence human nature. We see, indeed, men persisting in vicious courses contrary to their interest, and even to the ruining of their characters, fortunes, souls and bodies; but then it is for the present gratification of some predominant appetite or passion; but as the apostles' testimony could administer no such gratification, so the whole of their doctrine was every way opposite to all ungodliness and worldly lusts, exhibiting the justest view of the divine character, the strongest obligations and motives to holiness in heart and life, and the most dreadful view of the evil consequences of sin. And with this doctrine their own lives exactly corresponded. They exhibited an unblemished example of sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, attended with the greatest mortification, self-denial, and contempt of earthly things, sacrificing

all for a good conscience. What but the strongest conviction of the truth of their testimony, and the most certain prospect of a glorious life beyond the grave, could make them hold fast the word of their testimony, despise the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, rejoice in their severest sufferings for it, and cheerfully lay down their lives to confirm it?

5. The *wonderful and sudden change* which took place upon the apostles, within the space of fifty days after the crucifixion of their Master, is a strong proof of his resurrection, and can never be accounted for upon any other principle. While he was with them, during his personal ministry upon earth, they occasionally discovered a great deal of ignorance respecting the end of his coming into the world, the work he was to finish, and the spiritual nature of his kingdom. They were exceedingly slow in receiving his instructions, their minds being pre-occupied with Jewish prejudices, so that when he was just about to be apprehended, he tells them, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" but at the same time, he gives them to understand, that they should be fully instructed in a little while after his death, John xvi. 12, 13. chap. xiv. 25, 26. They had worldly notions of the kingdom of the Messiah, were ambitious of promotion to the chief places in it, and disputed among themselves who should be the greatest, Mat. xviii. 1. chap. xx. 21. Mark ix. 33, 34. Luke xxii. 24. They were fearful and apt to be intimidated on any appearance of danger. Hence they attempt to dissuade their Master from going into Judea, John xi. 8. When he was apprehended, Peter, the most courageous and forward amongst them, denied him, and the rest forsook

him and fled, being scattered as timorous sheep who have no shepherd, Mark xiv. 27, 50, 71.

But, behold the amazing change which took place upon them soon after. Divested of their worldly views and ambition, they were enlightened in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and published the gospel with great boldness, freedom, and irresistible evidence; nor were they intimidated by all the threatenings of their powerful adversaries, but, with inflexible resolution and fortitude, they declared their testimony in the presence of kings and councils, and rejoiced in being counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, Acts ii. iv. v. and xxvi. while they gave up with all hope of worldly happiness or preferment in this life, and looked forward with joyful hope to a state of endless felicity beyond the grave, 2 Cor. v. Phil. iii. This change cannot be accounted for, without admitting that they had the fullest conviction of the truth of what they testified; that they were instructed of Christ after his resurrection; that he opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45, 46. that he inspired them with fortitude and resolution, and that, according to his promise, he endued them with power from on high; and gave them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay, nor resist. Acts i. 4, 5. chap. ii. 4. Luke xxi. 15.

V. The truth of Christ's resurrection is fully established by *the supernatural witness of the Holy Spirit*, which is the witness of God himself. When Jesus ascended on high, he poured out upon his apostles the Holy Spirit in his miraculous gifts, according to his promise. This

was not only an evidence of his resurrection, but of his exaltation to the right hand of God; and hereby the apostles were endowed with power from on high, both to declare and confirm their testimony. By this these illiterate Galileans were furnished all at once with the gift of tongues, so that the numerous multitude from all nations of the world, who were then at Jerusalem, heard them declaring the wonderful works of God in the various languages of their respective countries, Acts ii. 6, 7, 8. By the same Spirit they were also endowed with the power of working miracles, such as curing the lame and blind, healing the sick, raising the dead, &c. and these miraculous gifts were exercised in the most public manner, so that their most inveterate enemies could not deny them. Acts iii. 7—12. chap. iv. 14, 15, 16. chap. v. 12, 15, 16. The apostles disclaimed all their own power and holiness in performing these miracles, and attributed them entirely to God, or to the name of the risen and exalted Jesus, chap. iii. 12, 16. chap. iv. 10. Indeed they could be ascribed to no other cause; for they were not only above the power of man, but of such a nature as not to admit of second causes, they being altogether above the established laws of nature. Our Lord shews the absurdity as well as unpardonable wickedness of ascribing these wonderful works to the agency of demons. As they were altogether beyond the power of Satan to perform, so they were perfectly contrary to his inclination, they being designed to confirm a doctrine which was every way hostile to his kingdom and interest among men; a doctrine which taught men the knowledge of the true God, and influenced them to fear, love and obey him. One species of these miracles was, that of ejecting demons;

and how absurd would it be to suppose, that Satan would intentionally overthrow his own kingdom, by commencing hostilities against his infernal associates, and so be divided against himself? Mat. xii. 24—33.

But it may be asked, how do these miracles prove that Christ rose from the dead? or what connection is there between a miracle and the truth of another fact? The answer is obvious: The apostles testified the resurrection of Jesus, and wrought these miracles in the sight of all men for the express purpose of confirming the truth of that fact. They testified that Jesus was risen, exalted, and made both Lord and Christ; and God, by such supernatural works of his power as are peculiar to himself, gave a visible attestation from heaven to the truth of what they declared. Thus "God bore them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and distributions of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will," Heb. ii. 4.

The apostles performed these miracles by the faith of Jesus and invocation of his name, and ascribed them to his power, Acts iii. 16. chap. iv. 10. chap. ix. 34. Now this was not only a declaration of his resurrection from the dead, but a demonstration of it to the very senses of men, by these visible effects of his power in his risen and exalted state. Jesus had done many miracles during his ministry upon earth; but he tells his disciples that they should "do greater works than these, because" says he, "I go unto my Father: And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I DO," John xiv. 12, 13. We find them accordingly asking the Father in his name, "Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and

that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus," Acts iv. 29, 30. Jesus, according to his promise, answered their prayers by *doing* those things which they had asked the Father in his name, and thus manifested, beyond all contradiction, that, though he had been dead and buried, he was now alive and wrought with the Father and Spirit in every divine work. And thus, in his glorified state he characterises himself to his servant John, " I am the First and the Last, and the Living One, and became dead; and behold, I am living for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hades and of death."

### *The* AGREEMENT *of the different accounts of what happened on the day of his Resurrection.*

ON comparing the accounts given by the four Evangelists of the particulars which took place on the day of Christ's resurrection, some difficulties occur, particularly in finding out their exact order, and in adjusting the different circumstances relating to them, so as to make their perfect harmony appear. Though I do not pretend to avoid all mistakes on this subject, yet if I can succeed so far as to evince that there is no inconsistency in the different accounts, my end is gained. I shall therefore, in the first place, make a few general remarks; and then arrange all the particulars into what I take to be their order and connection. I remark,

1. That no single Evangelist gives a full account of all that happened from Christ's resurrection to his ascension. John admits this with regard to his account, chap. xx. 30. We find several particulars recorded by some

of the Evangelists, which are omitted by others; and there is reason to believe, that many transactions took place both before and after Christ's death, which are not recorded by any of them; see John xxi. 25. Yet John considered what he had written as sufficient to convince men that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, chap. xx. 31. But from this it is evident, that we cannot have the whole even of what is recorded, without collecting it from all the Evangelists.

2. The Evangelists do not always observe an exact chronological order in their narrations, but sometimes omit the circumstances of time and place; nor do they always use the same expressions in their several relations of the same things, nor state them with the same minuteness. Hence an attempt to arrange all the materials in exact order, is attended with difficulty, and in some instances with uncertainty. But such circumstantial differences do not in the least affect the truth or consistency of the several accounts. They indeed shew, that the sacred penmen did not write in concert, nor combine together and consult with each other as to every circumstantial minutia, that they might avoid every colour or shew of difference, as cunning men would have done to avoid detection: But this very circumstance, instead of weakening the credibility of their narratives, affords a considerable argument for their truth. They write under the direction of the Holy Spirit, like men of integrity, fully convinced of the truth and importance of their subject; and while they shew a noble negligence as to some minute circumstances, perfectly agree as to the facts. Their main design was to give an account of the character and mission of Jesus Christ, and of his doctrine,

miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension, with the great end of the whole; in all which there is the most complete agreement and perfect consistency with each other.

3. The principal events which took place on the day of Christ's resurrection, (the period which we have particularly in view,) are mentioned by all the Evangelists, such as the women's early visit to the sepulchre—their errand there—their finding the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus gone—their seeing a vision of angels, who told them he was risen, and desired them to inform his disciples—their actually doing so—the incredulity of the disciples—Christ's appearing first to the women, and afterwards to the disciples when met together, &c. As they all agree in these facts, the only difficulty lies in a seeming difference as to some circumstances relating to them. To remove this difficulty we must attend to some particulars which are apt to escape the reader's notice; as,

(1.) That there were a number of women engaged in the design of embalming his body, viz. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and certain other women with them, whose names are not mentioned, see Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiii. 55, 56. chap. xxiv. 1, 10. These women do not appear to have been all in one company, nor to have come to the sepulchre at the same time, nor to have met all together there, but some left it before others arrived, and had different appearances of angels made to them, and messages given them.

(2.) There were two different appearances of angels made to the women. The first is mentioned in Mark xvi. 5, 6, 7. and in Luke xxiv. 4—8. The last in Mat.

xxviii. 5, 6, 7. and in John xx. 11, 12, 13. That these were two different appearances of angels is clear: for after the first appearance of angels none of the women saw Jesus; but after the second appearance, Jesus revealed himself to Mary, John xx. 15—18. and soon after this to some other of the women, Mat. xxviii. 9, 10. From this, and some other circumstances, it appears, that both Matthew and John pass over the first vision of angels which the women saw, and only mention the second. Matthew indeed mentions only one angel whereas John mentions two; but that makes no difference as to the fact; for though two appeared, one only might address them. In like manner it is clear, that the two Marys and Salome went first to the sepulchre, Mark xvi. 1. yet John only mentions Mary Magdalene, chap. xx. 1. but an omission is no contradiction.

(3.) Mary Magdalene visited the sepulchre twice. The first time, she saw the stone had been removed, and concluding the body was taken away, she immediately ran to tell Peter and John, Joh. xx. 1, 2. Then she returned to the sepulchre, and stood there weeping, ver. 11, 12.

(4.) Peter also went twice to the sepulchre. First, along with John upon Mary's intelligence, John xx. 6, 7. Next, upon obtaining further information from a company of the women, Luke xxiv. 12.

The above-mentioned particulars do not appear without consulting and comparing all the Evangelists; but, if duly considered, will be found useful in reconciling the different accounts. With these particulars in view, I shall now give a brief detail of the whole transactions of

that memorable day, placing them in what I consider to be their proper order and connection.

During the time of our Lord's lying in the grave, several of the women who had attended him from Galilee, together with some of their female friends at Jerusalem, having observed the sepulchre, and how his body was laid, agreed to meet there early on the morning of the first day of the week, to embalm his body, Luke xxiii. 55, 56.

The two Marys and Salome seem to have set out (πρωι) before the time appointed; for they came very early while it was yet dark, Mark xvi. 1. John xx. 1. and their design was (θεωρησαι) to view the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 1. that they might judge whether they and their companions could remove the stone by which it was shut up; for it does not appear that they then knew any thing of the guard that had been placed upon it.

While they were on their way, or perhaps a little before they set out, Jesus arose, the guard fled, and the angel who had rolled away the stone, it would seem, disappeared for a time, Matt. xxviii. 2, 3, 4. Mary Magdalene, as she approached the sepulchre, perceiving that the stone was removed, concluded that the body of Jesus was taken away, and, leaving the other Mary and Salome to wait for Joanna and her company, she immediately ran to tell Peter and John, Joh. xx. 2.

While she was absent, the other Mary and Salome entered into the sepulchre, and saw an angel, who told them that Jesus was not there, but was risen from the dead, desiring them to acquaint his disciples with this, and that he would meet with them in Galilee. The

greatness of their consternation prevented them from saying any thing immediately to any one, Mark xvi. 5—9. This, and their meeting with Jesus as they returned, occasioned some delay of their report.

They had not long been gone when Peter and John (perhaps passing by them at some distance) came running, and Mary Magdalene following them. John at his first arrival only looked into the sepulchre; but when Peter came and entered into it, John went in also, and, from the state in which he found things there, believed that Jesus was risen, though the angel did not render himself visible to either. Then both of them immediately returned to their own home, John xx. 4—11.

Mary Magdalene was now left alone, and remained at the sepulchre weeping: but stooping down and looking in, she saw two angels, who asked her the cause of her grief. She replied, it was because they had taken away her Lord, and she knew not where they had laid him. But quickly turning herself back she saw Jesus, whom she mistook for the gardener, who made himself known to her and gave her a message to his disciples, John xx. 11, 12, 13. Thus he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, Mark xvi. 9.

Leaving her suddenly, Jesus appeared to the other Mary and Salome as they went, whom he permitted to embrace his feet, comforted them under their fear, and renewed the assurance the angel had before given them, that he would meet his disciples in Galilee, Mat. xxviii. 9, 10.

While these things were passing at some distance, and none remained at the sepulchre, Joanna and her company (of whom Luke only writes) came there, and,

entering it, at first saw none in it, till two angels, who a few minutes before had appeared to Mary Magdalene, made themselves visible to them, and told them that Jesus was risen, reminding them of his words concerning his crucifixion and resurrection, Luke xxiv. 3—8. Some of this company ran to the city, and happened to find the eleven and some other disciples with them, before the two Marys and Salome could find them, telling them that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that Jesus was alive, ver. 9, 23. This is all the intelligence which these women could give; for as yet none of that company had seen Jesus himself. As to what is said, ver. 10, 11. it respects all the women who informed the apostles first and last.

Upon the intelligence of Joanna and her companions, Peter ran a second time to the sepulchre, and found it in the same state as formerly with the linen cloathes lying, but saw no angel, Luke xxiv. 12. But it seems that in his return to the city he met with Jesus himself; for Paul mentions Cephas as the first of the apostles who saw him after his resurrection, 1 Cor. xv. 5.

At last the two Marys and Salome arrived, and told the disciples that they had actually seen the Lord; but their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not, Luke xxiv. 10, 11. Mark xvi. 9—12.

The same day Jesus appeared to two of his disciples who were going to Emmaus, who had heard only the women's first report. After he had made himself known unto them, they returned immediately to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, who appear to have given credit to Peter's

testimony; for they said, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon;" and to this these two disciples added their testimony, Luke xxiv. 33, 34, 35.

*Lastly*, While they were conversing on this subject, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, blamed their fears, shewed them his pierced hands and feet, and eat before them, Luke xxiv. 36—44. With regard to his subsequent appearances and conversations with them, they are all easily adjusted, and therefore I shall proceed no further on this head.

## *The* IMPORT *of Christ's Resurrection.*

THE resurrection of Christ, once established, supplies us with a new principle of reasoning. It opens to us a new path, which leads us to the discovery of many capital truths. Most of the doctrines we are required to believe, and of the duties we are commanded to practise, are so many inferences naturally deducible from this fact. But I shall confine myself to what the apostles have expressly stated as its import.

1. It imports, *That Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.* The resurrection is one of the prophetic characteristics of the Messiah, as Peter shews at large, Acts ii. 25—37. To this Jesus refers the unbelieving Jews, as answering to the sign of the prophet Jonas. And Paul says, that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by his resurrection from the dead," Rom. i. 4. It was therefore a full proof of his being the Messiah the Son of God, and fully determined the controversy between him and the Jews.

2. It is a proof of *the perfection and efficacy of the atonement* which he made by his death. The apostle says, "If Christ be not raised—ye are yet in your sins," 1 Cor. xv. 17. plainly intimating, that his resurrection was a proof of the efficacy of his sacrifice to take away sin, and that he was raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25.

3. It imports *the resurrection of the saints at the last day*, and is the proof and example of it. This the apostle argues at large, 1 Cor. xv. where he shews, that "if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised—But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept: For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," &c. ver. 16—23.

4. His resurrection imports, that *the judgment of the world is committed to him.* So Paul informs the Athenians, that "God now commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts xvii. 30, 31.

### *The* MORAL INFLUENCE *of Christ's Resurrection.*

THE Apostles did not satisfy themselves with bearing witness to the truth of Christ's resurrection merely as a fact, nor with giving a mere doctrinal statement of its import; but they also set forth its importance and usefulness in relation to its influence on the heart and life. The

experimental knowledge and powerful influence of this grand truth, in a more abundant degree, seems to be what Paul so earnestly desired, when he says, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection," Phil. iii. 10.

1. The resurrection of Christ, once established, has the most powerful influence in producing *faith* in the whole of the gospel revelation. As it is by his resurrection he is determined the Son of God with power, Rom. i. 4. so it establishes our faith in the truth of all his doctrine and promises, and in the efficacy of his whole work, as Redeemer. It is by his resurrection we are convinced that his death was a complete atonement for sin; and so justifying faith is described as a believing on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Rom. iv. 24. a believing in the heart that God hath raised him from the dead, ch. x. 9. We could not have faith in the sufficiency of the atonement could we only say, "It is Christ that died," unless we could also triumphantly add, "Yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," chap. viii. 34. nor could we glory in his cross without believing that he "was raised again for our justification, chap. iv. 25. for "if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain; we are yet in our sins," 1 Cor. xv. 17. Without this we could have no evidence of his victory over death, or of his defeating him that had the power of death, nor any assurance of a resurrection to eternal life by him; on the contrary, if Christ be not risen, "then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ are perished," 1 Cor. xv. 18. But now that Christ hath risen from the dead, this glorious fact is not to be considered merely as a

detached article of faith, but as involving and demonstrating all other truths which we are required to believe unto our salvation. If once this fact stands as an infallible truth in the heart, faith requires no more for its support; every thing then appears easy, consistent, and satisfying. Here faith takes its stand as on a rock, and from thence surveys and traces with pleasure the stability of the whole system of divine truth.

2. The resurrection of Christ is the foundation of *hope*. The import of this fact, when perceived and believed, is sufficient to inspire the most guilty and desponding sinner with good hope towards God. It imports, that Christ, as the substitute of the guilty, hath made full satisfaction for sin by his death, and that he hath obtained a full discharge in his resurrection from the dead. It demonstrates that God is placated and fully well pleased with his sacrifice, and demands no more, Heb. x. 14, 17, 18. By his bringing Christ again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, he reveals himself as the God of peace, Heb. xiii. 20. This alone is the spring of good hope to a guilty sinner, and not any change which he feels in himself. It is the amiable character of God displayed in this fact, as the God of peace, that gives peace to the troubled conscience. Justice is amiable in itself, and an essential property of the divine character, but it affords no ground of hope to the sinner till he sees its demands fully satisfied, and he has no evidence of this but in the resurrection of Christ. It is this which gives the answer of a good conscience towards God, 1 Pet. iii. 21.—Further, it is by the resurrection of Christ that God begets his people to the lively hope of future glory. So Peter gratefully declares,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. In this great gospel-truth we see death abolished, and life and immortality brought to light, 2 Tim. i. 10. Christ rose from the dead as the first fruits of them that slept, 1 Cor. xv. 20. and there was a sample given of the power of his resurrection in the bodies of many of the saints which slept arising out of their graves, and appearing unto many, Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. Such is the connection of the resurrection of Christ with the resurrection of the saints that they stand or fall together; "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen," 1 Cor. xv. 13. Every proof therefore of his resurrection proves theirs, and that with equal certainty. This therefore is a sure foundation of lively hope, even the "hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before the times of ages?—but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," Titus i. 2. 2 Tim. i. 10.

3. Those who believe in their heart that God hath raised up Jesus from the dead, and are begotten again to a lively hope by it, must feel the sanctifying influence of this truth on their hearts and affections. "Through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Christ from the dead, those who were dead in their sins are quickened together with him, having all their trespasses forgiven; and are raised up together with him, and made

to sit together in heavenly places in Christ." Col. ii. 12. Eph. ii. 6. This has a powerful influence upon heavenly mindedness, and upon this principle it is urged, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear then shall we also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 1—5. The faith of this truth purifies the heart both from the guilt of sin and worldly lusts. It elevates the mind above every grovelling and entangling attachment to earthly things, and spiritualizes the affections. How insignificant must the momentary enjoyments of this present life appear when compared with the glories of eternity, which open upon the mind through the resurrection of Christ! The hope of this is of a purifying nature; for it is affirmed as a certain truth that, "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," 1 John iii. 3. Carnal men indeed naturally love happiness, and may entertain presumptuous hopes of heaven, according to their notions of it; but in reality they have no idea of heavenly happiness, nor any taste or relish for it, consequently can neither hope for, nor enjoy it: But the true hope of heaven includes the love and desire of its enjoyments, which are all pure and spiritual, and it carries this along with it, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, or be capable of enjoying him, and therefore must necessarily be of a purifying nature.

4. The resurrection of Christ has the most powerful influence on *obedience*. It proves that he is made both Lord and Christ, and establishes his authority as an

supreme king, lawgiver and judge to whom we are accountable. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 9. He died "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," Tit. ii. 14. But it is in his rising and reviving that we see the power and efficacy of his death to redeem; for he was raised again for our justification. The love of Christ, which is the great constraining motive to live unto him, is discovered not only in his *dying for us*, but in his *rising again*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. It is from the doctrine of Christ's resurrection, and consequently of the resurrection of the saints, that the apostle urges obedience upon believers, "Wherefore my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 58.

5. The resurrection of Christ, and the hope grounded on it, is a *source of consolation amidst all the afflictions of this life*. The hope which supported the first Christians under persecutions of various kinds, and kept them from fainting, is thus expressed by the apostle, "Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you," 2 Cor. v. 14. That hope to which they were begotten by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, made them greatly rejoice, even when under the pressure of manifold trials, 1 Pet. i. 3—7.—This is the grand consolation proposed to alleviate our grief when death hath bereft us of our Christian relations: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that

ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14.—It is through faith in Christ's resurrection and victory over death, that the believer triumphs in the prospect of his own dissolution. He knows that Christ hath abolished death, deprived it of its sting by expiating sin, and hath removed the curse of the law which gave sin its strength to wound; so that he can triumphantly exclaim, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

Thus it appears, that the resurrection of Christ is not only the great proof of the truth of the gospel in general, and of every article of the faith in particular, but has the most powerful influence on all who really believe it in producing true holiness of heart and life. How important then is the exhortation which Paul gives to Timothy, "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel?" 2 Tim. ii. 8.

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